

Library

St. Olaf College

Northfield, Minn.

THIS BOOK IS PART OF THE
SLOAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY
OWNER - GUSTAV H. JOHN

**A PSYCHIC VIGIL IN
THREE WATCHES**

A PSYCHIC VIGIL IN THREE WATCHES

ST. OLAV COLLEGE LIBRARY
BOSTON, MASS.

NEW YORK
MCBRIDE, NAST & COMPANY
1917

BF1261
• P97
1917

Originally Printed in 1896
Second Edition (Methuen & Co., Ltd.) 1917

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	vii
THE FIRST WATCH	I
THE SECOND WATCH	68
THE THIRD WATCH	108

FOREWORD

AT a time when Death is busy violently sundering human ties and companionships, the interest of living men and women in the unseen and unknown hereafter becomes painful in its intensity. An acute anxiety, a profound and wistful curiosity follow those who have passed thus suddenly beyond the veil; we long to know how it fares with them; and in our bereavement we stretch our hands out towards the unknown, craving for some reply, some token that the familiar and beloved individuality still exists.

Of special interest, therefore, at this moment, are the pages that follow. The editor feels that in giving them to the public he is helping to make known a sane, reasonable and beautiful contribution to the literature of a subject to which no human being can be at heart indifferent. This work was privately

printed in 1896; the author is still living; and although in the course of twenty-one years some modifications of opinion are natural and inevitable, he has found little to alter or to add to the book as he originally wrote it. His desire for the preservation of a strict anonymity will be sympathised with when the intimate nature of the book is considered.

To the former edition, privately printed in 1896, the Reverend H. R. Haweis, who prepared that edition for the press, contributed a preface from which the following passages are extracted:—

“I am all the more happy to superintend the general arrangement and editing of this book as I have reason to suppose that its author might never himself have taken the trouble to carry out its publication. I think it would have been a loss to the reading world had so acute and candid a survey of what is vulgarly and inaccurately called Supernaturalism not seen the light of day. The present is a transitional moment of thought and opinion on all occult matters, and this opportune discourse is, in fact, a phase of constructive opinion caught

on the wing. But the author, having written, seemed to feel that he had discharged his mind, and he had actually laid his MS. aside, just as Turner, the painter, would often dash off a water-colour sketch, and, having caught its effect, fold the paper up all wet and put it in his pocket, never caring even to look at the blurred study again.

"This study I deemed well worth preserving, and I have been permitted by its author to hang it up in a slight editorial frame of my own. My task, however, has been a light and pleasant one—a modified paragraph, or a sentence excised, a slight rearrangement of matter, and a general marking of divisions and paragraphs.

"If I venture to contribute these lines of preface it is not with a view to adding anything to the clearness or the value of the book, which of itself gives no uncertain sound, but because I should like to point out that it is an effective illustration of what Mr. Balfour described as the supreme importance of generating a Psychological Climate for thought.

"Many, after reading the following pages,

will take an entirely different view of the bugbear called 'Supernaturalism.' They will perceive, perhaps for the first time, that people who believe in apparitions and abnormal phenomena have as little sympathy with 'Miracles' as they themselves, and that, in the near future, for all reasonable folk, the distinction will not be between the miraculous and the non-miraculous, but between Law known and Law unknown."

The foregoing words were written in what we should now call a quiet time. To-day the foundations of civilised life are being shaken, and in the convulsion old thoughts are being buried, new thoughts thrown up. Yet the new and the old, as the reader of these pages will agree, are strangely alike; the great thing is that thought should exist and be fostered. For the man and woman of ordinary intelligence to be shaken out of indifference, even by violent and tragic means, is often in itself a good thing. And if, as Mr. Haweis added, they are "led to perceive that they are themselves the centres of spiritual forces, both giving out and receiving the energies and the inspira-

tions of a spiritual universe, the dignity of life will be enhanced, and its horizon indefinitely extended."

It is only by a complete revision of our ideas as to what constitutes Reality that we can hope to wrestle with the disease of Materialism and prevent its involving the world in utter ruin. To that end I believe this book may in some measure contribute.

Y.

London, 1917



A PSYCHIC VIGIL IN THREE WATCHES

THE FIRST WATCH

I

THREE men, who may as well be called Tom, Dick and Harry, as anything else, were sitting one summer evening after dinner in a little room looking out upon the placid waters of a land-locked bay. They were silent, but the silence was not so much due to the usual cause—want of something to say—as to the reticence natural to a reflective pause in a conversation of a more or less engrossing nature.

Tom, a half-finished but extinct cigar between his lips, was gazing at nothing out of the open window, with that look of calm and placid vacuity settling upon his features that tells of vivid thought fading slowly in the brain.

Dick was leaning forward, his hands clasped upon his knees, in an attitude of expectancy, looking with keen questioning eyes for something more to come; while Harry, gently pounding out the ashes of a cigarette upon his plate, wore a half-amused, half-serious, and wholly perplexed expression upon his face. He was the first to break the silence.

“Well,” he said, “what you have been telling us is most extraordinary, very puzzling, and, to my mind, unsatisfactory. I have heard of such things before—who has not?—in this curious blending of the mystical and material that is characteristic of the age. I have read accounts of *séances*, and am aware of a considerable literature devoted to spiritualism and kindred topics, and consequently I acknowledge the existence of a large number of persons interested in those subjects—but somehow or other you are the last man, my dear Tom, that I should have picked out as one likely to have actually seen things so extraordinary, and, what is perhaps stranger still, you seem to have thought about them, too. Tell us some more. Don’t turn off the tap of information just as it was becoming interesting. Not more ‘experi-

ences.' I have heard enough to make me doubt whether I am standing on my head or my heels ; but what I want to know is what do you do with it all ? What's the use of it all ? How do you fit it into any religion, philosophy, or rule of life ? "

" First," replied Tom, " take my word for it, you are not standing in any acrobatic posture, or even in the position normal to man. Reassure yourself, at any rate, on that point ; you are sitting ; and as far as I know that attitude is incapable of inversion. Secondly, I will talk to you as much more as ever you like, and try and explain the thoughts that are sometimes shaping themselves in my brain, so that you may understand the nature of the little philosophy there is in me, and the basis of fact upon which it rests. I will endeavour to present to you the theories I have founded on certain psychological phenomena. What I have seen I have seen, and I have sometimes thought about it, and have come to some conclusions. Probably there is no merit of originality about them, original as they are to me, for I have never read a book on philosophy, metaphysics do not attract me, and into the works of theolo-

gians I have never delved. I have no desire to dive into metaphysical depths or to soar to giddy heights of imagination. I should only fall and hurt myself, and you, too, in the vain attempt. You are quite right, Harry ; I am, in truth, the last person in the world likely to have witnessed the facts just narrated, for my mind does not naturally incline towards occult science. You may think otherwise, but I am right, for we all know ourselves better than any one else can, and could of ourselves, if we would only use a truthful brush, draw a most accurate picture. Yet people usually think otherwise. Some complacent idiots really think they can see further into a man than he can into—or rather out-through—himself.

“ Personally, I am very much upon the material plane, not given to inward searchings, or to scorching my wings at the intolerable flame of incandescent truth, or to explorations in the dangerous but fascinating field of psychological research. Action, work, is congenial to me ; but to all men a period of reflection at some time or other is bound to come. Circumstances arise that, rudely throwing them off the rails on which their

little lives have run so smoothly for so long, jerk them into wreck. It may be the crush of sorrow, the crash of faith, or some bitter disappointment, that does the cruel but perhaps salutary work ; or it may be that unsatisfying creeds, weariness with the vanities of life, reaction against mere aimless days, or general revolt against this hard old world, does the work. Be that as it may, circumstances do arise in life which cut deep into the mental and emotional faculties, and resolve all sense of right and wrong, justice and injustice, and many other preconceived ideas into their original elements.

“ There are times when beliefs fall in tatters. In a state of painful confusion man struggles to form something ; and, impelled by a strong desire for some adequate and orderly conception of life, sets himself the task of fitting the shreds together into some religion or a system of some kind. And—well, facts are facts, and will set one thinking, especially if one has not much to do ; and so it is that I, belonging perforce, for the present at any rate, to the great army of the unemployed, have come to think about the strange things that I have seen, and have striven to

find method and meaning in them ; perhaps I have even hit upon some little grains of truth.

“ I will talk with you, if you wish it. Only on religion I cannot speak. On theology, yes, because I know nothing about it ; on religion, no. That is sacred to the inner self, unspeakable as is love, the one real love in a human being's life.

“ And now, Harry, what more do you want to know ? I have told you what I have seen with my own eyes, heard with my own ears, touched with my own hands ; and I have explained the circumstances, and have shown you how, even if I doubted my own senses, the phenomena I have seen are proved to be actual phenomena and not hallucinations by evidence that cannot be gainsaid or explained away. You want me now, I suppose, to explain the method, to formulate some theory, to say what I think of ‘ spiritualism,’ of what use it is to any one, what can be done with it all. That is a large order, but I will do my best.

II

“ To tell you the truth, ‘ spiritualism ’ occupies my thoughts very little, for reasons

I will try and explain to you. I think but seldom about it, and it is not often that I talk on the subject ; it only leads to endless and barren discussion. But I am in the humour, and what I know, and what I think, I will expound to the best of my ability, and you can take it for what it is worth.

“ There are two distinct kinds or phases of spiritualism : Physical Spiritualism, or the effect claimed to be produced upon material objects and our senses by spiritual beings ; and True Spiritualism, or the knowledge that man is a spirit and may hold communication with spirits embodied and disembodied. The facts we will take for granted. There is indeed no sense in arguing about the truth of the facts of physical spiritualism. Careful and crucial investigation has proved them over and over again. Evidence enough exists on that point to hang a nation, and as I can obviously add nothing in the way of proof to what I have already said, we will not go over that ground again. I will start on the assumption that you all acknowledge the facts of the phenomena constituting what is generally called ‘ spiritualism ’ ; yet I

do not expect any man to believe who has not by personal experience convinced himself.

“That, however, is not such a difficult matter. If you are really serious and have the time and patience, look into the matter yourselves. If three or four of you will sit together frequently, the chances are at least ten to one that some phenomena will occur. They may take the form of tiltings of the table, rapping, independent movements of heavy bodies, such as tables, chairs, and other furniture. Being convinced of these facts, you will desire to discover their cause, and will probably jump at the conclusion that they originate in some capricious working of magnetic currents, or of some obscure force emanating from yourselves.

“Presently you will find communications and coherent messages coming to *you*. Still mere emanations of your own earthly brains, you may say. Continue the experiments, and you will be driven to the conclusion that, whatever the source is, it is *intelligent* and *external* to yourself.

“You will now be forced to admit that creatures of some kind, spirits of the dead,

or spirits that have never known incarnation, are talking by signs to you.

“What are they?”

“They will claim to be men and women. Are they? That is the first problem you will have to solve.

III

“I can only give you the result of my own experience. It is many years since I took any active interest in ‘spiritualism.’ I pursued my investigations, framed my conclusions, satisfied myself on certain points, which is saying a good deal, and abandoned the subject. But before doing so I became convinced, by long-continued and searching experiment, that of all the theories accounting for these phenomena the one most rational and least open to objection—the best working hypothesis—is that the communicating spirits are human, and that under good conditions the messages do come, sometimes directly, but more frequently indirectly, from the spirits claiming to have sent them.”

“But why did you give it up?” interrupted Dick. “How could you cease to

occupy yourself with a matter which, if it be true, transcends all others in interest ? ”

“ I ceased to be interested, partly because the subject is so interesting, and partly because it is so unsatisfying. This spiritualism must be dealt with in a common-sense practical way. In the first place, I look upon public professional mediums with great suspicion. What would you ? A man or woman gives *séances* at a pound or five shillings a head, and makes a living out of it. As a *métier* or means of livelihood *séances* are obviously dependent on results. If you succeed in interesting or terrifying your clients with tolerably uniform success, business will be brisk. If frequent failure is your record, your visitors, even if they do not go the length of asking for their money back, will certainly not come again, and will not recommend their friends to come. People don't like paying money for nothing. It may be curious, but they don't. Now ‘ manifestations ’ are, from our ignorant point of view, most precarious ; they are governed by and depend upon a variety of conditions, physical, mental, and atmospherical, which we do not in the least understand. Professional mediums are

mediums right enough. They have a certain abnormal gift, and perfectly genuine manifestations occur through them ; but when circumstances are unfavourable and nothing occurs, they are apt to produce something ; they resort to trickery. That a professional medium must be simply a trickster is absurd ; exposure would be too frequent ; fraud would defeat itself. Still the temptation to cheat is great, and for that reason I put little trust in the professional. Investigation, to be satisfactory, should be conducted with some one whom you can completely trust. Now, the gift of mediumship is rare, and it is rarely cultivated except for gain. The difficulty of obtaining the assistance of a trustworthy and developed medium is one reason why I abandoned my researches. Other reasons there are also, as you will presently see.

IV

“ Now, I will take you a step deeper. The spirits having most control over physical objects are those having the greatest affinity with earth. The lower, the more grossly material is the spirit, the more natural power

does it possess of manifesting itself through the ordinary phases of spiritualism—turning tables, moving furniture, rapping out messages, making noises, ringing bells, materialising, and the like. Remember that fact in the first place. In the second place, let us try and grasp the dynamics of affinity. To a certain extent like seeks and finds like, of natural impulse, in the physical world ; in the spiritual world, the law of affinity acts with immense force, irresistibly. You have a public medium, a man probably of coarse fibre both spiritual and physical, not perhaps over cleanly in his life, resorting to frauds when his natural powers fail, and using his gifts as a means of making money. What do you find with such a one ? Exactly what you might expect to find, a few fraudulent manifestations mixed up with a certain number of genuine ones ; and the genuine phenomena produced by low and lying spirits attracted to the medium by his own low and lying atmosphere. I have seen and heard of communications purporting to come from Christopher Columbus, Dante, Shakespeare, Socrates, St. Paul, angels, the Christ Himself, which in their nature and grammatical ex-

pression would have disgraced a city clerk or a village 'school-marm.' Do you suppose I consider them genuine? Certainly not, as coming from the sources attributed to them; but genuine, yes, in the sense of being *bona-fide* spiritual messages—messages coming from a low, deceitful class of spirits, who seem to take great delight in humbugging and playing silly jokes, and are naturally attracted to the medium by his personality and mode of life. You will see from this that, in my opinion, the first requisite in investigating the phenomena of spiritualism is to secure the co-operation of a person possessing the mediumistic faculty, but not using it for purposes of gain; a person, moreover, of a nature and character that you would like to associate with. The rank in life and position in society matter nothing, but the natural instincts and proclivities and the acquired habits and mode of life of your medium matter a great deal.

V

“And now we will take another step. Albeit your medium is of a clean habit of mind and body, truthful and inhabited by a truth-

ful and cleanly spirit, yet the communications may not be genuine, in the sense of proceeding directly from the spirits in whose name they come. The fact still remains that undeveloped, low, earthly spirits have, over the physical phenomena of earth life, greater power than have spirits more highly developed and of a more refined nature. It may be that the spirit communicating to you is doing so, not only through your medium, but through some spirit or spirits more closely allied to earth life than he himself is. I do not mean to say that very pure, very advanced spirits do not directly communicate with their friends on earth. I know they do, but I think it is comparatively rare, and that as a general rule communications from exalted spirits are transmitted to those in the flesh through some other spirit, or through a series of spirits in a gradually descending scale. This fact detracts much from the value and interest of the phase of spiritualism we are considering."

VI

"How then is the genuineness of a message to be tested?" Dick asked.

“ You must appraise the value of a communication by the nature of it, and judge of its genuineness by reference to what you know of the person purporting to send it. By their fruits you must know them. Try and realise the situation. You are at one end of the wire and the operator is at the other end. He sends you a message. How are you to know who he is ? You can judge only by means of your natural bodily senses, and by that uncommon quality, common sense. Ask for proof of identity, and, if the operating spirit is genuine, he will give you all the proof that under the circumstances is possible. By recalling facts, peculiarities, circumstances, little incidents, and things long ago forgotten, he will give you all the proof of identity that I, for instance, in New York, could possibly give you in London on conversation through the cable. That is all the direct proof possible. But you will judge also indirectly by the little mannerisms of style, by the whole character and nature of the message. And that is the limit of proof. Beyond that, in these kinds of spiritual phenomena, you cannot go or get.”

“ I am afraid I must call it rather unsatisfactory,” Harry observed.

“ Yes, to a certain extent it is unsatisfactory. There is no absolute certainty in it, no absolute proof possible ; you cannot demonstrate that the message you receive comes from the spirit that claims to send it. At best it is but a probability ; but where a spirit satisfies every possible and reasonable test of identity, the probability is, I think, very great. Identity is not such an easy thing to prove even when one is in the flesh. The difficulty is plainly evidenced in our law courts ; and, in dealing with disembodied spirits, we are at a manifest disadvantage owing to the facilities for dissimulation they probably possess. They may be able to read our thoughts and supply tests out of our own brains. If they can materialise themselves at all, that is, make, as it were, temporary bodies for themselves, visible and tangible to us—as they undoubtedly can—there is nothing that I know of to prevent them fabricating the presentment of another and taking an appearance foreign to themselves. I know nothing of the laws they work under, nor does anybody, I think, know very much. It may well be that a materialised lie is not permitted, or, I should say, is rendered im-

possible, by some natural law ; still, personally, I would not believe in the identity of a spirit merely because I saw the semblance of the dead in living form."

VII

"Truly you are of a sceptical mind," said Dick ; "one of those who would not believe even if the dead rose again."

"Yes, you have me there. I admit it. I am well named Thomas, I suppose. 'See me, touch me, handle me, it is I myself.' They fulfil that test, and what more can a spirit do ? Still I am inclined to think it is better to be too sceptical than too credulous in these matters. I have seen so much harm done, such loss of individuality and of the all-important sense of responsibility accruing from too blind belief. So many worthy people have so often been led astray. I have known people who consulted their spiritual 'guides' on all questions, even on the most trivial affairs, till they became completely unable to do anything of themselves. I have seen people lose all robustness of character, all decision, all power of initiative, through

attributing every incident of life to direct spiritual interposition ; and such degradation of character is deplorable. Even if satisfied as to identity, never let spiritualistic messages influence you against your own instinct, and your own judgment. Why should it be supposed that disembodied spirits are, owing to the mere fact that they *are* disembodied, better judges of terrestrial affairs than we are—we who are still encumbered with the flesh ? The idea, though very general, is mere superstition. There is neither logic nor reason in it. It is more than probable, I think, that our friends on the other side have little or no cognisance of the physical on this side. I think our physical bodies and the material world as we see it are invisible or very dimly perceived. The disembodied spirit sees the spiritual part of us and the spiritual counterparts of everything on this material globe, and they can judge of our physical condition and environment only by studying the action of the spiritual upon the material. Imagine a fish translated into the upper air : would it, on that account, be any wiser as to what is going on in the depths of the sea ? No, no ; there is no truer saying than this, that ‘ the

children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.'

VIII

"I have gone over the ground hurriedly, just sketched out the line your investigations should take and the direction in which they should lead you. Of course it will take time ; but, granting a good opportunity of investigating and persevering, I believe that any intellectual person, pursuing his inquiries in an earnest, a critical, but unprejudiced spirit, will arrive at conclusions somewhat similar to mine. Some persons attribute all phenomena of spiritualism to elementals, the action of sprites of some sort. I do not know whether such creatures exist. If they do it is quite possible that some of the phenomena are attributable to them. I have no objection to the theory that sprites, monsters, gruesome occurrences, murders and other horrors are, as it were, photographs of actual occurrences, remnants of mental and of physical conditions, clinging to places and things saturated with the physical and mental emanations of actors long departed from this plane

of existence and becoming visible to the physical eyes of some peculiarly constituted persons under conditions about which we know nothing. The subconscious mind is called into play to account for people in an hypnotic or trance condition, displaying knowledge which in their normal state they do not possess, speaking in tongues of which they are quite ignorant, and a whole host of phenomena of that kind. That multitudes of impressions are made upon what, for want of a better word, is termed the subconscious or subliminal mind—impressions which under normal conditions do not act upon the conscious mind but which do so in abnormal conditions—that is, I dare say, true. But that theory must be forced into quite grotesque dimensions to account for all the facts of spiritualism. If you examine the cases carefully and critically you will see that to account for all occult phenomena by that means the theory of the subconscious mind must be strained beyond breaking point; and you will agree, I think, that the best working hypothesis is to be found in the belief of interference on the part of active intelligences of some kind, and in a probability, amounting

in some cases to a certainty, that the intelligences are human spirits that have lived on earth, and often are what they profess to be."

IX

"Yes, I understand; but do you believe in the serious interference of spirits in the things of this world?" interposed Harry. "Are not their communications generally of a trivial character?"

"Yes, indeed I do, up to a certain point; but it is just as well the interference should not be too largely recognised here. Let me take an extreme example—what is called demoniac possession, for instance. Time was, time is in some countries, when all insane persons were held to be possessed of evil spirits, and exorcism was the only cure. That, of course, is false and utterly absurd. Insanity is due to bodily disease, to some active mechanical obstruction, or to a want of proper co-ordination of the natural forces. But some cases of apparent insanity may be due to obsession, and are curable only through the recognition of that fact. If spiritual therapeutics and hygiene were properly under-

stood, and if a school of properly qualified psychological practitioners existed, there would be fewer cases of dementia, homicide, and suicide in the world ; but in the present condition of the race, the extreme view we now hold, that all cases of madness are due to physical causes alone, is far better than the extreme opinion formerly held : that all cases of madness were due to spiritual causes alone.

“ That opens up a very curious field of speculation. How far are what we call hallucinations—real or unreal—objective or subjective ? When a man in *delirium tremens* sees horrors, does he see them ? Or does he only think he sees them ? Who can tell ? Some people are afflicted with hallucinations. They see people, dogs, monkeys, all kinds of queer things, and they are frequently cured by rest, seclusion, diet, a couple of big blue pills. The perfectly natural comment of mankind is that the liver is out of order, or the nerves over-taxed, and that the object supposed to be seen is a delusion, merely imaginary. Whether that be true or not it is far better in our present condition of ignorance that we should think it is. I would sooner fancy my liver out of order than be-

lieve myself to be tormented by the visible presence of a veritable imp. The theory that such visions are purely imaginary may be true in all cases, or in some, or it may not be true at all. Who can say what objects invisible to the healthy man may be cognised by irritated brain cell, or congested nerve? Who can presume to decide whether Dante, Swedenborg, or any other seer saw, or only thought he saw, the scenes and objects he described? No one.

“Yet certainly it is true that communications are generally of a trivial character. Is not that natural? And remember it is by trivialities that identity can be best established. Little characteristic tricks of manner or of speech, recollection of small and intimate incidents are better evidence than attempts to convey to our material senses spiritual phenomena which our physical senses cannot apprehend. If continuance of personality is conceded, surely it is illogical to suppose that physical death works a radical change in personal characteristics. Why, for instance, should the discarnate intelligence be assumed to lose all sense of humour? The trouble is that the general

conception of the change wrought by physical dissolution is that it is so great as to practically amount to the extinction of the personality. That conception is erroneous.

X

“As regards the ordinary phenomena of ordinary spiritualism, my opinion is this: All phenomena occurring with professional mediums should be looked upon with distrust. All phenomena, however occurring, should be submitted to your own reason and judgment. Submit all communications to the most rigid tests for identity; remember the facilities for deception that exist, and exercise your right and duty of private judgment always. The incongruities, and occasionally the absurdities of spiritualism, are to my mind amply accounted for by the imperfection of the means and apparatus of communication, by the imposture not unfrequently practised, and by the nature of those spirits that possess the greatest facility of communication.

“Of course there are means of proof, ways of judging of and discerning spirits

quite apart from and vastly superior to the exercise of the ordinary physical faculties of man ; but these discriminating faculties are developments of spiritual senses or of embryonic physical senses enjoyed only by a few. Of those means I am not now speaking. I am considering only what I have called the ordinary phenomena of spiritualism as presenting themselves to the uninitiated eye. And I have put the case against them as broadly as I can, trespassing, perhaps, into the realms of ingratitude when I think of what spiritualism has done for thousands. I investigated it very thoroughly for some time, as I have told you, and I came to the following conclusions :—

“ FIRST, that the facts were real and true.

“ SECONDLY, that the phenomena were caused by intelligences external to myself.

“ THIRDLY, that the intelligences were, as a rule, human beings like myself, only disembodied.

“ FOURTHLY, that, under proper conditions, communications or actions could be relied upon as proceeding from the spirits claiming to impart or produce them.

“ The natural and inevitable corollary of

such conclusions must be a firm belief in conscious individual continuance after death, and an equally vivid consciousness that acts, words and thoughts were perceived by many, and among them by some whom we hold in love, veneration and respect.

“I was a young man when I looked into the question ; I am an old one now. It is years since I have attended a *séance* or seen anything whatever of spiritualism. I never read and rarely speak about it. But the effect of my past experiences remains, and will remain, while memory lasts, and beyond.”

There was a pause, a silence hushed by the long cadence of the Atlantic swell, till Dick, rousing himself, said :

“Well, I can quite understand all that, if one was once persuaded of the truth, but I won't pursue the idea contained in that 'if.' What puzzles me is this : you say that for years you have taken no interest in spiritualism. How *can* that be ? If I had seen what you have seen and think as you do, I should never have ceased to take the most vivid interest in researches and experiments. Spiritualism would have become the passion of my life.”

“ Just so, and what good would that have done you ? ” replied Tom. “ I gave up investigating for two or three reasons, and very excellent ones, I think. I found I did not get much ‘ forrader ’ and I perceived that I had other work to do. I came rather reluctantly to the conclusion that I had seen all that was necessary for me of spiritualism, that my strong point did not lie in the direction of occult science, and at any rate that my plain duty was to address myself to the hard, dry, matter-of-fact material problems of earthly existence.”

“ Oh ! ” cried Harry, “ how can you reconcile yourself to such a lot ? After all, what interest in affairs of this life can compare in intensity with that arising from the study of the affairs of the life to come ? What career—be it that of statesman, philosopher, letters, the arts, what you will—can for one moment compare in honour with a life devoted to the investigation of occult science ? What are we here for but to prepare for a hereafter ? Think how the craving earth thirsts for knowledge. Are not the minutes passed in any other pursuit but time wasted and a degradation to the human intellect ? ”

“Not so, my dear fellow ; you are perfectly wrong. There is a time for all things and a man for all things, and one career is as honourable as another, if it be but useful. Don't worry yourself overmuch. Have a little patience, a little faith. Is one labourer more worthy than another ? Is one gift more honourable than another ? Not one whit. How would the business of the world be carried on if all were dreamers ? Who would solve its social problems ? Conduct its states ? Subdue its nature ? Clothe and nourish our bodies, build our houses, clean our streets ? In the sweat of our brow we must eat bread. Do not despise the man who works out his little day in honest toil. Perhaps it is not the man who cuts the widest swathe that reaps the best reward after all. It is only the idle and the utterly selfish, the purely self-indulgent, and the mere self-seekers who are quite to blame. Do your best to do something and be patient. If you lay just one little brick in the great edifice, one very little brick so small that no human eye will notice it, and lay it as true and well as you know how, it is good ; do not think it will escape the eye of the great Architect of

all. It is part of the great whole, and you have done it. You have done something ; be content. How men do needlessly torment themselves ! In truth, this morbid generation is more prone to self-condemnation than to self-content. Work at whatever in you lies. Work at that which comes to your hand, and thus help the great work along, be it by ever so little."

. XI

" After all, then," said Dick, " as it seems to me, your experiences do not lead to much. They teach little and convince less. How is it that so little practical knowledge results ? Why don't these spirits tell us what they are about, where they live, how they feel ? Surely if one spirit would give us an intelligible and intelligent account of how he had spent one month or one hour, it would be infinitely more interesting than all the messages and homilies, and, if you will forgive me, platitudes, they are so fond of indulging in."

" My dear Dick, you are, as usual, perfectly right ; yet permit me to hazard the

conjecture that platitudes are most excellent things. What is a platitude but a truth generally admitted? Deprive us of our platitudes and what would become of art, literature, and conversation? Nothing could possibly be as interesting as the diary of a spirit; but, unfortunately, they don't keep diaries for us, and if they did, their diaries might possibly convey no meaning to us. Many people wonder, as you do, why spirits cannot impart information about themselves to us, and they argue that those who communicate must be sprites—elementals of some kind, not human spirits.

“But are you not a little unreasonable in the broadest sense? Discarnate spirits can communicate with incarnate spirits, but the communication cannot be grasped by the physical brain or, at best, can only take the form of some image in the physical brain. You think the animal physical brain ought to be able to translate into ordinary animal language the communications of a creature divested of an animal physical brain. That is really unreasonable. You complain of the unsatisfactory nature of communications. Why cannot they tell us this? Why cannot

they say the other? How is it that we know so little where they are, what they do, and how they pass the time? Surely their conception of time and space must be very different from ours, and if you think for a moment, if you try and grasp the situation, you must see that the marvel is that they can convey any meaning at all to us.

“Try and realise the difficulty of reconciling in some common language the difference, not of degree but of kind, between spiritual and bodily existence. How can one set of senses commune with other and totally different senses? What do we know of the consciousness of other animals? Can we explain ourselves to fish, birds, or even to the dog that is our truest friend? And yet we all possess identical senses that differ only in degree. To impart a clear conception of the solar system to a flatfish may be an easier task for us than for a spirit to bring any conception of his existence within the grasp of our animal intelligence. How can we see what we have no eyes to see, hear what we have no ears to hear, and comprehend that which makes no vibration on our nerves?

“Spiritual things can be apprehended only by the spirit. Spirits—the beloved ones who have ‘gone before’ are cognisant of us, but only of the spiritual us. What knowledge they may have of our physical conditions and circumstances is derived from the reaction of our spiritual condition upon our physical condition. When spirits converse with us, or act in any way upon material objects, they do so by re-entering as it were the conditions of material life, and they can only deal successfully with the material objects of that life, and the thoughts, expressions, and actions appertaining to them. They cannot tell us of themselves, of their life, any better than we can tell of everyday life in London to the child unborn; not so well indeed, for the unborn babe has all the qualities and senses necessary for understanding, only undeveloped; but the purely animal possesses, so far as we know, no sense or rudiments of senses that ever can, whatever development time may have in store, enable it to understand spirit. Spirits can come down to our level. They can operate upon inanimate objects. They can influence us. They can talk to us but in terms of this world only.

They can give us messages of love. They can whisper the sweetest words of hope. They can enter into our animal life by, for the time, animalising themselves—if such a term may be used ; but of the phenomena of their spiritual existence they can say not one word, because no word exists that can convey their meaning. The most that can be done is to try and express themselves in imagery ; and that has been the method pursued by all the seers of all kinds through all ages.

“ Sometimes the result has been most grotesque, often most unfortunate to man ; and, though the effort has produced the finest word pictures in the world, it must be admitted that, even in those cases, they have proved utterly inadequate to convey any impression of spiritual existence to our minds. And so it must always be. Animal alone speaks to animal, spirit to spirit. The spirit nerves within us vibrate, the spirit sees and hears, the spirit knows and understands—if it be sufficiently developed ; but to spirit only can it communicate its knowledge. You or I may spiritually apprehend, but we cannot translate what we have

laid hold of even to our composite selves. We cannot speak it, write it, paint it in colour, or hew it out in stone. Only in music does spiritual knowledge echo in fitful discord and concord upon our bodily senses ; and perhaps—who knows ?—perhaps in music lies the germ that may some day blossom into the medium of translation of spiritual into bodily terms. But that is a mere guess.

XII

“ We make a great mistake, I think, in thus struggling to make bodily senses cognisant of spiritual facts. Hence all the wrangling of theologians and the jar of creeds. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit. Men, gifted, spiritualised men, have seen a little into mysteries, have caught a glimpse of truths, and have tried to set them out in words and have failed, and have caused awful trouble in the world. What do you think of the Athanasian Creed, for instance ? To how many among those who say they believe it, does it convey any meaning ? Do you know

who wrote it ? I do not ; but whoever it was he probably saw deep. He knew something and tried to express it and failed. If you knew what he knew the words might have meaning for you, but you would not need them. If you know less than he, the words will never make you wiser.

“ Oh, what infinite anguish, what torture of quivering revolting brain, has this vain endeavour to convey objectively subjective impressions imposed upon misguided man ! What a commentary upon human nature is the relative capacity of language to depict pain rather than pleasure ! Happiness we cannot paint in words. How monotonous in outline, how colourless and grey are the inspired presentments of heaven ! How lurid in colour, how trenchant in description, how personal in hideous detail, how broadly apprehensible to our understanding, are the pictures of hell ! God is merciful, thank God, and there is a limit to capacity for suffering. Man in general no longer thinks he believes in a personal devil and the everlasting burning of a physical hell ; and when he did think he believed them, his nature revolted into a semi-comical conception of

a devil, a wholly unrealised idea of hell, and an intermediate Purgatory, the negation of both ! But still to many hell has been and is a reality, a reality so horrible that no man could support the thought but for the natural limitations on imagination. And what is the origin of Hell ? This same insane desire to paint spiritual conditions in colours objective to the animal eye. No, no ; all attempts to explain spiritual phenomena to animal senses, whether dealing with the highest mysteries of religion or with the ordinary incidents of spiritual existence, must fail. I know no more sweetly pathetic and graphically rendered description of the impossibility of the task than that given in that most artistic and truly delightful book, ' Peter Ibbetson.'

“ Those who have gone before may talk with you, and they can enter into your thoughts and wishes, hopes and fears, plans and deeds, for they can descend to your inferiority and draw themselves back into relationship with your physical life. And you may talk with them, and they can take happiness in your thought for them ; you can mutually love and help each other, and

they can understand your life—a life which they have once led. But when *you* come to try and understand *their* life you find a great gulf fixed, a line that cannot be overstepped bars the way, for your spirit only can understand and the measure of its understanding is its emancipation from the flesh.

“ Well it is that such is the case. Try and conceive for a moment the frightful confusion that would ensue if the spiritual and earthly planes were brought so close together that spiritual beings were able to take part habitually and overtly in the affairs of this world. All the revolutions that have occurred on the face of this globe since man was man, rolled into one, would be but a zephyr’s breath as compared to the overwhelming tempest of a catastrophe such as that. You would have spiritual criminal classes, spiritual detectives and police ; clairvoyant Prime Ministers, and clairaudient Secretaries of State. Murdered men would give evidence at the trial of their murderers. It would be useless killing men in battle, for they would go on fighting just the same. There would be no inheritance, no widows or widowers, for

practically no one would be dead. No plagiarisms in literature, and therefore no literature. No cribbing in art. Good heavens ! what a small residuum of original thought would remain ! No one would ever be alone. How would your brain stand that, my friend ? And how would the situation fit in with your ideas and practice of life ? A ridiculous and exaggerated picture, you say. Yes, ridiculous, but not exaggerated from the point of view you suggest. It is well for us that the veil is thick. Well for us that the fracture between flesh and spirit is so complete ; though good, of course, it is that the veil can be lifted a little, just enough to show that it is a veil and not a blank nothingness, that there is light and much more behind.

“That the veil will become thinner and thinner, more and more transparent, in the course of time, as man becomes adapted to a clearer view, I have no doubt whatever ; but the progress ought to be, and will be, very, very slow.*

* Perhaps it has not been so very slow. Much has been done in the way of psychic research, and the war must be producing results far-reaching but beyond the cognisance of our shortsighted eyes. Of the consequences upon national character, social problems, and other aspects of material existence it is un-

XIII

“Progress is not uniform, but in curves. The multiform faculties of man do not advance simultaneously. Advance in one phase of human intellectual effort is always accompanied by stagnation or retrogression in some other phase. At one time the arts prosper, at another theology leads the race. One era is devoted to psychological, another to physical research. Doubtless the psychological knowledge of mankind in ages long necessary to speak ; but the effect upon modifying the arbitrary conditions of what we call “life” and “death,” but which would be better described as “dream” and “reality,” must be mentioned. The thousands of feet hurried across the line are beating down the path. The thousands of individualities thrust violently through the veil are weakening it. The thousands of the bereaved, broken-heartedly yearning for some proof that their dead are not dead, nor sleeping, but are gloriously alive. The thousands craving to express that they are more fully alive than they have ever been. All this must produce natural results. The veil is not actually torn—it is well it should not be, but it has worn thin. The two worlds have come closer together, and intercommunication is not uncommon. Nevertheless I adhere in general to what I have said in warning about professional mediums and *séances*. If mourners still in the flesh would try to put themselves into a condition of reciprocity, conscious of the truth that their beloved out of the flesh are alive and near them, and would pray the good God to help them both, I believe that recognition spiritually derived—unconscious to the senses—would make itself felt, and in some cases so distinctly as to materialise into manifestation apparent to the material senses.

a

gone by was far more profound than the little glimmering of truth that begins to dawn upon us again now. The world has been passing through a most purely materialistic period, and has thereby accumulated a knowledge of the exact sciences, and has acquired an exact and scientific frame of mind that will be of inestimable benefit to it by and by during the psychological era, the first rosy dawn of which is beginning to break against the dull, barren mountains of materialism."

XIV

"You are right in stigmatising this as a materialistic age," broke in Harry; "it is so indeed, and the worst of it is that the foremost minds, the most cultivated intellects, the great men of science, with a very few illustrious exceptions, who should lead the van, are most hopelessly bigoted in that respect. Materialism is the corollary of science; atheism the too frequent if not inevitable accompaniment of a scientific mind."

"No! No! Harry, you greatly exaggerate. What you say may have been true once, but it is not true now. We must never

forget the debt we owe to scientific men, obstinate and dogmatic on these psychological subjects as some of them are, for they are fulfilling a most useful rôle. They act as a salutary drag. As long as the scientist flourishes the winged horses of spiritualism will not run away with our coach. Scientists hunt by nose. Others by sight. Truth leaves a devious track, and while some of us with eyes uplifted may see the glimmer of her, right in front of us, the scientist with nose to earth is smelling out her trail at right angles ; but it is her trail all the same, and, surely followed, it will at last lead to her. I own the scientist is sometimes aggravating. I remember years ago somebody—I forget who—wrote a foolish little book criticising ‘ levitation,’ and having premised that levitation involves a violation of the laws of gravitation, he proceeded to argue that levitation is therefore impossible, and that all the evidence in its favour is false. Quite so. His deduction would be unassailable were his premise correct ; but it is not. ‘ Put case,’ as Robert Browning would say. ‘ The law of gravitation is known and is inviolable. Ergo, to jump over a four-foot wall or a six-foot drain

involves a violation of that law. Ergo, no man has ever jumped, or ever will jump, over a drain or wall.' Such is the argument. Human experience, however, teaches us that men can and do leap over such obstacles, and we come to the correct conclusion that they overcome the law of gravitation by the exhibition of energy. By human experience we are also certain that the phenomenon known as levitation occasionally takes place, and a man not blinded by acrid prejudice comes to the perfectly correct conclusion that it is accomplished by the exhibition of sufficient energy to overcome the law of gravitation to that extent. A great advance has been made, but I agree that it is strange that even now men of scientific acquirement, men brought face to face with nature's mysteries, men who one would suppose would be the humblest of human beings by very reason of their knowledge, are to be found who sooner than admit the existence of forces in nature of which they are ignorant, or that known forces may be used in ways unknown to them, will without examination deny the existence of facts proved to be true, as surely as anything can be proved by

human testimony. It is so much easier to say, 'I do not understand, therefore it is not,' than to admit 'It is, but I do not understand.'

XV

"I remember a correspondence that occurred some time ago on modern mesmerism. Among other matters, the writer mentions an experiment in transference of sensation made upon a hypnotised subject by means of a gutta-percha doll. The doll was held before the subject, and then, when various parts of the doll were punched or pinched, the subject was supposed to feel the punches or pinches in her corresponding parts. This theory a learned objector proceeded to annihilate, arguing on the assumption that the operator claimed to have created actual sensitiveness, that is, nervous sensation in the doll. Can any one imagine a more childish contortion or distortion of meaning? But I have a theory of that doll business which I may as well propound.

"It was a custom, as you know, in black magic, to make little waxen images of people

who were to be tormented or done to death, and then to stick pins into the image, causing, so they claimed, excruciating pain in the parts corresponding in the patient ; a most nefarious practice if successful, a very harmless pastime if of no avail. Was the operation ever fruitful of results ? I do not know, but I know it was thoroughly believed in as a reality for many centuries by educated men ; and, received in the light of what is now called hypnotism, I see nothing absolutely and antecedently impossible about it. The effect, if produced at all, was produced by suggestion and imagination, and no limit can be placed upon the possibilities inherent in human imagination and human will. If I can make you sick by suggesting that you have swallowed a fly, there is no reason, except lack of power, why I should not give you a pain in your leg by suggesting that a hot iron was stuck in your sciatic nerve. Whether the effect be due to your imagination or not makes no difference to me provided you feel it ; that is all I care about. If the pressure of my will upon you can thus bring on a pain in your leg at the distance of a yard, there is no reason, save lack of power, why I should

not impress you at the distance of a mile or a hundred miles. It is purely a question of the intensity of the maleficent will-power, and the susceptibility of the person operated upon. There is nothing obnoxious to reason or incompatible with what we know of nature in a theory that one human being may, by the exercise of will, affect by suggestion another human being at a considerable distance. It is impossible to say what the human will, if strong enough and directed with knowledge, might not be able to perform.

“The waxen image, of course, played but a secondary part. It produced no direct effect upon the person operated upon ; but served as a useful stimulant to the operator. It acted solely in this way : it helped him to concentrate all the powers of his will in a supreme effort against the particular part of the person he strove to influence by suggestion.”

“But, my dear Tom,” interrupted Dick, “surely you don’t believe these old wives’ tales. You don’t seriously say that such things happened ? ”

“No ; I don’t mean to say they happened, and I don’t mean to say they did not happen.

All that I wish to point out is that the *rationale* of the method is quite simple, and involves no such absurdity as the transference of sensibility or creation of a nervous system in an inanimate object like a waxen figure.

“ The waxen doll fulfilled, in black magic, functions similar to those exercised in the sphere of religion by the images of saints, or sacred music, or sacred architecture, or a beautiful ritual. All such adjuncts serve to heighten the imagination, to concentrate the will, and stimulate aspiration. Many people can pray earnestly only before an image ; it concentrates their aspirations, it helps them to focus the diffusive rays of thought into a burning wish, and the effect produced by the image is commensurate with belief in the image.

“ A hypnotiser, as we should now style him, using a waxen image to represent the person he wished to affect, was strong in exact proportion to his faith in the image as a spell-working object ; for confidence—faith—is the first requisite of the successful use of will-power. Whether such aids to concentration are successful—that is, are productive of practical results—is another matter. My

private opinion is against the doll ; but this must be admitted : that at one period of the world's history it was universally believed in ; and that there is nothing in the theory repugnant to our present state of knowledge. What the natural limitation of faith and will is no man knows. I have not the slightest doubt that a long series of experiments would demonstrate the power of a skilled operator to cause pain in the bones of his sensitives at some distance by a direct exercise of will ; and if he could absolutely persuade himself of the certain sure efficacy of his india-rubber doll, he would find his power increased by placing it before him and concentrating upon it, as representing his sensitive, all his energies at the moment of striking in the fatal pin. The doll would serve as a psychological burning-glass to focus the rays of his will ; that is all.

XVI

“ Though perhaps of no practical value, the study of witchcraft and magic is interesting as showing the workings of curious but, of course, purely natural faculties inherent

in human nature. Was witchcraft ever practised ? I think it must have been. The weight of evidence in support of that proposition is enormous, and evidence must be accepted in proportion to its weight. The little we know of mesmerism and hypnotism and spiritualism proves not only the possibility but the probability of witchcraft ; indeed, it does much more, it supplies us with a rational theory of the methods and means employed. Why, then, has witchcraft practically ceased to exist ? For the simple reason that men have ceased to believe in it. This may sound paradoxical, but it is true ; men have not abandoned their belief in witchcraft because it has ceased to exist, witchcraft has disappeared in proportion as men have lost faith in it. Ninety-nine-hundredths of cases of reputed witchcraft were purely imaginary ; that is to say, consequences attributed to magic were due to other and totally different causes. Ignorant superstitious men had recourse to witchcraft to account for everything that puzzled them. But there were accurate observers, close reasoners, and acute thinkers in those days. Real cases of witchcraft did occur, and were produced by methods

identical and similar to those employed in the mesmerism and hypnotism of the present day. People were bewitched in their persons or property by the exercise, by persons operating for that purpose, of will-power acting through some vehicle probably physical. Of the nature of that agency or vehicle I am ignorant. Perhaps it is an emanation of the body, a subtle fluid that serves as a conductor for that still subtler fluid, the human will. To practise witchcraft two parties are required, the active positive operator and the passive negative subject. An operator to be successful must be naturally gifted with the necessary vehicle and with will-power ; and he must have learned how to use the vehicle and how to concentrate, direct, and project his will ; and for a successful operation the subject must be in a state of receptivity, either naturally or artificially produced.

XVII

“ And now you perceive the essential part played by faith, credulity, and imagination. The operator was strong in proportion to his

faith. The subject was weak in proportion to his faith. And now, too, you see the important part played by the adjuncts of witchcraft, by the means employed, the images and spells and incantations. They served only to heighten the imagination, to intensify the compelling will and diminish the resisting will, to cause a kind of hyper-anæsthesia and anæmia of the senses. But, as is often the case, the symbol became more respected than the quality symbolised ; direct instead of indirect effects were attributed to the incantations and images. As men became enlightened they perceived that the potency of spells consisted in themselves, not in the spell. Man was relieved of unreasoning terror, and at the same time deprived by his reason of supernatural strength. The human will fell back into natural equilibrium. With the waning and death of a firm belief in the efficacy of charms and spells, black magic waned and died because it lacked the positive and negative qualities produced by that firm belief.

“ The same phenomena can be witnessed any day, in very modified degree, at any *clinique* where hypnotism is practised or even

at any *séance* of a public mesmeriser. The old paraphernalia are dispensed with because we have outgrown belief in them, and without firm faith in them they are of no value ; no results could be produced.

XVIII

“ But enough of this kind of talk. It would lead us, if pursued, into long rambling dissertations on witchcraft, magic—white and black—amulets, philtres, charms, and what not—all interesting topics of speculation, but scarcely worthy of serious consideration in the present day. Suffice it to say, that to laugh at the superstitions of our forefathers and to scoff at the idea of reality in these obscure branches of occult science is but to exemplify the arrogant ignorance of stupidity. The truth is that amulets, charms, philtres, incantations, blessings, cursings, produced effects ; but they produced them indirectly by intensifying or depressing the natural physical powers and qualities of man.”

XIX

“ Do you mean to say,” asked Dick, “ that people who were ‘ bewitched ’ were thinking, feeling, and acting under an influence which men now describe as ‘ suggestion ’ ? That the spells and mummmery of witchcraft acted, though in a very base and low degree, in a way similar to faith ? And do you believe in the so-called miracles of Lourdes and other places, or in the results produced by faith-healers, mind-curers, Christian science people, and a host of others ? ”

“ Yes, I think that what we now call suggestion acting through certain accessories covers the case. And I do believe in so-called miracles to this extent, that I think a candid mind must admit that, though there are many failures, cures do take place in many instances. And how ? Well, they are not miraculous. There is no such thing as a ‘ miracle.’ In the case of the so-called miracles at Lourdes they are attributed to the Virgin Mary. Christian scientists believe in some reflex action due to recognition of the oneness of God and man. Some healers act by laying on of hands, others by prayer,

and others again are content to say they can heal but do not know how or why. How can I answer your question? Who shall place limitations or conditions on the 'I am' unlimited and unconditioned? A cure may be the result of divine influx, or of some personal healing quality in the healer, or of an act of faith on the part of the sick, or of a supreme effort of will by the person operating, or of the assisting will of powerful and exalted spiritual beings. Cures always have been and are effected under various religions, in various places and by various means, but the means are only channels. But I cannot eliminate suggestions. Results are often produced by appealing to the faith, credulity, imagination, thought, call it what you will. We are all acquainted with the effects of will-power, animal magnetism, imagination in the affairs of everyday life. For instance, no man can be an orator who is not gifted with these qualities, nor an actor unless he possess the faculty of convincing himself—at any rate, for the time being—of the reality of his part; for if he fails in that, he fails in will-power. The orator and the actor act upon their audience by suggestion.

“ And do not all men, medical and lay, recognise the effect of fear and confidence in actual and possible disease ? Confidence that he will recover or conviction that he will die, acts beneficially or prejudicially upon a patient ; and we all know that people who have no fear of infection may often walk harmlessly in the midst of disease, and *vice versa*.

XX

“ No one denies the ascendancy of will in these common instances ; and to the same power in its various phases the healing phenomena of shrines and faith-cures may generally be attributed. You are interested in Christian scientists. Well, they claim to act on a totally different principle. They repudiate hypnotism and suggestion as improper, dangerous and immoral, and on the whole I agree with them. I do not pretend to understand their metaphysics though I have studied their text-books. They, like all other religions and philosophies, find themselves confronted with all the difficulties connected with the nature and attributes of a first cause, and the origin of matter, and of all

that we call evil ; and in trying to find escape by denying the existence of matter they make confusion worse confounded. So far as I understand their theories they may be roughly divided into two schools, the one rigorously denying the existence of matter, and consequently of all phenomena ; the other admitting the existence of matter while denying the reality—that is, the permanence of matter as we now perceive it. Their religious views do not appeal to me. Supplicatory prayer is, they say, wrong. It is trying to teach God His business. They put God, serenely unconscious of human suffering, too far away. Would a human child be content to be told that mother knew all it needed, and that it must not trouble her with requests or fly to her for comfort when frightened in the dark ? I think not, nor can mankind, God's children, be happy in the conception that our Father-Mother knows nothing of our tribulations, is indifferent to our terrors and inaccessible to our prayers—at any rate, I could not. I postulate a God transcendent and incomprehensible, but also immanent and accessible. Surely that thesis must be accepted by Christians, for the

Christ practised and inculcated supplicatory prayer.

“But you are inviting me into very deep water. What is the use? Why venture out of our depth to be smothered in an ocean of perplexities? What is the use of speculating on the nature of a first cause? And yet to make myself intelligible at all I must do so. It is very hopeless, for we do not possess the machinery necessary for the purpose. We cannot arrive at conclusions. We can only formulate working hypotheses. You and I think and reason subject to limitations which we cannot even in imagination transcend. How can we then speculate on the nature of that which is not subject to limitations? We function within the boundaries of time and space, and we can do no other. No human brain can grasp eternity. We talk of eternity—of something enduring for ever, and, reasoning from experience of the lapse of time, we think we understand something existing and continuing for ever; but that is not eternity. To conceive of no ending seems possible, but to conceive of no beginning is impossible. And so it is with space. Can you imagine your conscious self

projected in a straight line and continuing for ever, and never coming to the end of suns and planets and worlds, or arriving at the last star, and beyond that—nothing? Or proceeding in a circle surrounded by nothing? Of course you cannot. 'Nothing' is inconceivable. So it comes to this. As long as we function in these dimensions the nature of a First Cause is inscrutable, and phenomena are wrapped in mysteries. I, at any rate, cannot conceive of matter as a First Cause. I cannot imagine matter creating mind. I can imagine mind creating matter. Mind precedes matter. The First Cause is mind or, as I prefer to call it, Spirit. There can be but one First Cause. Two 'firsts' are inconceivable. Therefore the one and only First Cause is universally responsible. The First Cause always has been, is and always will be. That is inconceivable to us, but it must be a fact. It cannot be the case that a First Cause was not, was, is, and will be, or will cease to be. The First Cause is 'I am.' The First Cause must be positive, creative, what we call Good, because the reverse, negative, destructive, what we call Evil, must result in nothingness and that is impossible. The First Cause cannot be sub-

ject to any limitation except itself. It cannot contradict itself. Call the First Cause God. Then God is spirit, unconditioned, conscious, creative, perfect. Unconditioned because conditions imply some other First Cause ; conscious because thought precedes creation ; creative because a material world and universe exists. We then butt up against the apparent contradiction that God is responsible for what we call evil as well as for what we call good.

“ We are face to face with the terrible fact that in this material world there is not life enough to go round. Every living thing sustains its life by taking the life of some other living thing. How is this compatible with a perfect God ? I do not know, nor does anyone. The theory of two original causes, one good the other evil, is out of court. There cannot be two First Causes. I am driven to the conclusion that God is responsible for both what we call good and evil. There is the theory that evil does not exist, that there is no material universe, no material world, and consequently no death, disease, suffering, sin ; that it is all delusion or illusion. That theory will not help us. Illusion is not a self-

existing entity. Something must exist to be deluded. Either God is subject to illusion, which is impossible, or man is subject to delusion, in which case we are faced, as before, by the dilemma that imperfection of a very pronounced character has emanated from a perfect God. I cannot stomach the theory that God thought a creation once for all; that it was very good, that somehow it has turned out very bad, and that God has no consciousness of the fact. That appears to me simply absurd. It postulates God as evil, and the difficulty of recognising good emanating from evil is just as great as the difficulty of recognising that evil emanates from good. Moreover, evil is destruction, negation, and we come to the absurdity that there is no First Cause at all.

"I believe in the immanence of God, in a creative energy always active, conscious, and therefore conscious of all the evil existing in one of God's thought forms this material world. Let me stick to this little planet. It is, of course, perfect in the eyes of God. God is not limited by time. We are. As far as we can judge the method of creation was the descent of spirit,—of life into inanimate created

matter ; and the ascent of spirit in matter through a very gradual process of evolution. For the sake of saying something let us say it has taken half a million years for the process of evolution to arrive at the present stage exhibited by man, and that another million years are required to enable it to reach the ultimate degree of perfection. God is not conditioned by time, therefore the perfected world is not going to be but *is*. But God must be cognisant of the limitations of His creatures and of His scheme of creation conditioned by time. The perfect world *is*. The imperfect world is *becoming*. It is the, in a sense, unreal counterpart of the real which *is*, and the unreal is gradually approaching the real through the process of evolution. Both the real and the unreal, that which is and that which is becoming, being the thought of God must be within the consciousness of God. How that is possible neither I nor anyone can say. But it involves two momentous considerations. God is aware of evil, and being good must suffer from that knowledge.

“ God created man in the image and likeness of God—not identical with God. But in the likeness of God which *is* and man is

becoming through an evolutionary process involving much tribulation. Why was creation necessary or desirable? That is an inscrutable mystery. God is omnipotent save within God's nature. God is one and could not create innumerable Gods. If God had, so to speak, made innumerable fragments of Himself they would have been mere automata. If self-sharing, self-realisation is the object of creation man must have been made a free-willing creature. He has free will and he used it erroneously. He thought wrongly and, being endowed with the creative power of thought he created all the phenomena we call evil, and until experience teaches him to think rightly he cannot come into his spiritual inheritance. Pain, so far as man is concerned, is educational, and surely will be recognised as such or made good in some way. But the suffering of the lower animals; what is to be said about that? It is an awful puzzle. That God could will or allow ninety-nine out of every hundred human beings to suffer eternal pain is unthinkable. It is equally unthinkable that God can will or allow any little creature of His, however humble, to suffer irremediable pain. Eternal torment for

human beings is, to me, a blasphemous libel on God. So is the useless, unmerited suffering of the lower animals. There is no difference in kind, only in degree. How it can be I know not and cannot guess, but surely the suffering of every creature that is conscious of suffering must be, and is, somehow, at some time, made good to its consciousness. I do not take the Bible literally, but the saying that one sparrow does not fall unknown to the Father, and that the hairs of our heads are numbered, conveys a great truth. For the existing condition man is responsible as a Secondary Cause. God is responsible as the Primary Cause. And God in some phase of God's being is cognisant of it all. God is impenetrable mystery. Who will dare to try and lay bare the nature of the First Cause? Father, Son and Holy Ghost we are told. The originating spirit. The word—the creating spirit. The sustaining spirit. Well, so be it. God is perfect. We cannot sense that. We with our limitations cannot apprehend absolute anything. Man is the image and likeness of God, and therefore possesses potentially an attribute of God—creative thought. Man is perfect so far as we

can realise perfection. The archetypal man once made manifest as the ideal *is* because that is the thought of the ONE unconditional. But in the same universal consciousness man is becoming, progressing towards perfection through the limitations and conditions of the whole process of creation. True, conditions are largely of his own making. He has reasoned on the false basis that life is a process of matter instead of on the true basis that spirit is life. He has thought wrongly and thought has created wrong conditions. That was inevitable in the scheme of creation. Man has not fallen from the ideal. He has not yet risen to it. It is the difficulty of realising that, in the consciousness of unconditioned, undifferentiated spirit, past, present, future are *one*, that has produced a condition of mind so confused that it seeks relief in denying God's consciousness of His own creation, or in denying the existence of a material universe. God is omniscient, and in some phase of being everything must be known to God. You think me illogically optimistic. Well, is that not better than being merely illogically pessimistic? I can only give you the outline of my philosophy.

Matter as a First Cause is unthinkable, contrary to all knowledge, experience and reason. Thought precedes all creation, all action. Everything we know and can reason from points to a First Cause originating matter. It must be conscious and creative. It must be good because evil is negation and destruction, and an evil First Cause must be dead or in process of dying. A First Cause having no beginning cannot have an ending. Of logical necessity it must be good because eternal. Of the necessity for creation I cannot guess. I think it inherent in the nature of the First Cause and always operative. As the logical result of all I can think concerning what is open to my senses I postulate a God, immanent, creative, good; and the best possible creation as God thought forms. All *is*, or (to us limited by time) *will be* well. So I cannot believe in the theory held by Christian scientists that matter—the material world—the material universe, our material bodies are not existent—are mere illusion; but I do believe that what we call evil is unreal in the sense that it is not permanent, and I do believe that a point will be reached in man's spiritual development when evil will

disappear, and the world will be to the eyes of man as it is in the eyes of God.

“ So far as healing is concerned the Christian science theory is, I think, that all evil, pain, disease, death and so on is eliminated by man becoming aware of his true relations with the ‘ Absolute,’ and of the relations of the Absolute to him, and allowing free action to those relations. I have some doubts about the ‘ science ’ of their religion or philosophy and more as to its being ‘ Christian ’ ; but unquestionably it has brought comfort, consolation and peace to many thousands, and has done much to lead some to a truer understanding of their nature, powers and duty. Hypnotism and suggestion are repudiated by Christian Scientists and other healers ; nevertheless, it is possible that they and others do act unconsciously by suggestion. Strenuous affirmation or denial *is* suggestion. Their ideal is very high and capable of generating great enthusiasm ; their mode of life is, I believe, pure, they are emphatically certain of their power, and they exercise it scientifically and frequently in combination. The effect of the strong, earnest, concentrated intensity of will-power thus thrown out must be great.

“Other factors of great importance may come into operation, namely, the infection of what I may describe as nervous epidemics—the contagion of hysteria, and spiritual power—the effect produced by spiritual beings on incarnated spirits and on their physical body through suggestion.

“The potency of contagion is recognised by all. We know that the sight of sea-sickness will make some sensitive persons sea-sick, the sight of pain or pleasure produces the sensation of pain or pleasure ; an hysterical attack, any exhibition of high nervous excitement, especially of a religious character, affects beholders, in proportion as they are sensitive of course, with extraordinary rapidity.

“The suggestion of discarnate human beings is precisely similar to the suggestion of incarnate human beings, and is strong or weak, pure or impure, high or low, good or bad, according to the nature of the sentiment that calls it into activity.

“But enough of this. All I wish to say is that it is true that cures are effected at Lourdes and in many other places, by Christian scientists and other healers. Failures are many and cures few, but they do occur.

All I want to point out is that, whatever our views on Divine interference may be, forces may be at work, though varying, of course, enormously in degree, in all the phenomena of faith, thought, will, suggestion, imagination, magnetism, that range from the humblest manifestation in the personal influence of individual men and women up to the highest form at present extant in the so-called miracles at Lourdes.

“ But we have wandered far from our subject and have drifted some way into the night—a night too rarely fine to waste thus stuffily indoors. If you want to hear more from me, it must be under the sky. We shall perhaps think more largely under the width of heaven than within these four small walls.

“ Let us go out. Get some rugs, and we will climb up a little way and sit in the cool night air under the stars, and smoke, and think, and chat in peace.”

THE SECOND WATCH

XXI

UP from the house winds a path through garden glades and tangle, on the sheltered side of the island, till, amid stunted pines and whins, a space is reached sloping westward to the sea. Here, where the rippling laughter of the eastern beach is lost in the deep breathing of great ocean waves, the three friends sat them down, wrapped in the soft comfort of the milk-warm air.

It was a perfect night, following a perfect day—one of those rare days that in our wintry summer adds, if anything, to our discontent. It was midnight, and the tired earth rested safe in the watchfulness of a broad full moon. Not a breath of wind stirred. Yet the air was cool with the salt freshness of three thousand miles of sea ; and the night quick with little ghosts of sounds, as though Nature murmured soft poetry in her sleep.

For a little while the three men sat in

silence, drinking in the beauty of night, and then their talk went on, Tom, as before, being the chief speaker.

XXII

“What a lovely night—lovely almost to the pitch of pain ! How can we climb down to the bare facts of life, and speak of cold philosophy beneath so benign a moon ? Sooner would I think of what has happened, and what is happening, and will happen as long as this dear old world lasts ‘on such a night as this.’

“I am sorry we came out. Easier would it be to lay down hard rows of facts, and build deductively therefrom, and seek to find their cause, under man’s roof, and by the feeble glimmer of man’s taper. It is a night fit to form a setting for that rarest of all jewels—sweet human romance ; a night to draw out the senses of the spirit ; a night in which pure spiritual beings might perhaps come within hand touch of ourselves ; a night for poetry, fancy, imagination, vision, dim perception of the unperceived.

“Look out on Nature ! The silent work-

ing of this mighty world, the vast universe in which it spins, as it were, no larger than the smallest grain upon the shores of the Infinite ; and all in harmony to the same great laws. And we a part of it. Nature and the law in us. We, subject to the law, and we, ourselves, the law. Part of it, and knowing naught.

“ Yet this at least we know, that all is orderly ; that the vast, incomprehensible impulse that is all-pervading works in grand rhythmical expressions of power and of force. Nothing is by chance. There is no miracle. There is only the Known and the Unknown. Where an apparent departure from law is perceived it is due to superior intelligence and power acting, within constitutional limits, in a way incomprehensible to inferior intelligence and power.

“ Omniscience and omnipotence cannot transcend itself. The idea is absurd ; it would cease to be. A right angle is a right angle or nothing. That is Fate—Destiny.

“ Natural law, as known to us, is part of the manifestation of God. Natural law is, in respect of the universe, by involution and evolution, the descent of spirit into matter

and the ascent of matter into spirit. With the first we have nothing to do.

“ The rule of evolution is from simple to complex, from lower to higher forms, and is gradual. In the inorganic kingdom matter forms various combinations in an ascending scale. An impassable gulf between inorganic and organic matter appears to exist ; but probably it is in appearance only, for Nature does not love violent change.

“ Science says that between *no life* and *life* there is no connection ; that the break is complete. Life is defined as motion, growth, waste, assimilation, reproduction. Inorganic matter does not grow ; but it increases in bulk by aggregation of atoms. It does not waste. It moves, obeying natural laws of attraction, repulsion, polarisation, with irresistible force. Dead matter expands and contracts. Atoms rush together or fly apart, and group themselves in crystalline shapes. But dead matter does not reproduce. I should define life as the ‘ POWER OF REPRODUCTION.’

XXIII

“ Reasoning by analogy, it is probable that in the properties of dead matter the germ of life is ; and it very well may be that as biological science progresses such will prove to be the case. This at least is certain—that from the beginning of life ascent is gradual.

“ No gulf exists between the vegetable and animal kingdoms. The relationship of all live matter is undoubted. Vegetable life develops itself so gradually into animal life that science cannot accurately define the kingdoms. For a long time animal existence consists of purely automatic obedience to natural law, and is, in its phenomena, in no way superior to inorganic matter. From this primitive condition animal life struggles up until self-consciousness is attained, and free will, the great principle of subsequent development, is felt.

“ Having risen to conscious separate existence, it of necessity becomes self-acting, possessed of free will and responsibility.

“ At what stage life becomes self and in-

dividually conscious I do not know. Let me confine my observations to man.

XXIV

“ Free will has been called the ‘ gift of men and angels.’ It is not their gift. It is *them*. If man had not free will, he could not be individual and conscious. He could not be man. He would not be. It is possible to conceive of a universal consciousness suffusing matter atomically unconscious, and, in its atoms, acting in unconscious obedience to polarity, attraction, repulsion. It is impossible to conceive of matter atomically conscious yet acting unconsciously. A contradiction in terms is involved. Equally absurd and impossible is the attempt to conceive of conscious activity without freedom of choice. A conscious creature may choose badly, may act weakly ; it may, also, as to its physical body be restrained or compelled. I do not claim for all men freedom of *action*, only freedom of *will* ; but, looking at it broadly, man is free and cannot escape from his freedom and its consequence—Responsibility. The idea of individual consciousness without free will is

paralleled in absurdity only by the conception of individual free will without consciousness !

“ Forgive me if I have laboured this point. It is so all-important. Stagnant waters there may be in the vast river of existence and whirlpools and back eddies ; but in the identity of self-conscious free will with responsibility consists the grand main current wafting us from we know not whence to we know not whither. Free will is an essential quality, an absolute necessity of individual conscious existence ; and individual conscious existence is an essential stage and inevitable necessity in the development of matter towards the universal consciousness of the universal spirit.”

XXV

“ I have,” interposed Dick, “ always looked with grave suspicion upon this theory of will. What mere playthings of circumstance we are ! And it is so much more comfortable to think we are, after all is said and done, but poor automata jerking out our insignificant lives—mere puppets dangling on strings pulled by whom and how we can never know.

Your doctrine of responsibility does not appeal consolingly to me."

"Whether will, and its inevitable consequence, responsibility, be a blessing or not we need not now discuss. If it is better to be alive than dead, preferable to be a man than that stone yonder ; if aspiration towards all-consciousness, universal will, omniscience, and omnipotence is to be preferred to the condition of inert, insensible, dead matter, then indeed our life, with its will, is a most precious gift ; for promise lies and can only lie in possibility of fulfilment. But we won't argue that out now. All I want to impress upon you is the utter scientific impossibility of your thesis. Grant the facts of creation and evolution, and my theory of man's responsibility must be correct. No possible loophole of escape exists. By no other means can the end of creation be accomplished. Every spiritual atom *must* of necessity have in itself the attributes of universal spirit, of all-consciousness, all-responsibility, all-power ; and in the evolution of the animal kingdom, a point *must* be reached when these attributes of universal spirit become individualised in the creature, and the creature becomes aware

of them. In the development of spiritualised matter or materialised spirit, there *must* come a time when consciousness is reached. Consciousness without free will is impossible, as free will without consciousness is impossible. They are inseparable. They are but different expressions of the same thing. And responsibility is, of course, an inevitable consequence of free will.

“Free will is the determining quality of progress. As it increases so the creature advances. It is strong or weak in proportion as it rules or is ruled by natural laws, as it understands or is ignorant of them.

“The quality of free will in men and angels is the same. It is stronger in the latter in so far as they are unaffected by natural laws applicable to the material body ; and uninfluenced by the natural, acquired, or hereditary defects of that body. But, be it remembered, all acquired and hereditary defects in us are the consequence of action resulting from the exercise of free will by others. Our individual freedom is marred and our individual responsibility proportionately lessened, by the use of the freedom and the use of the responsibility of other individuals ; but taking

the race, MAN in his entirety from the first, his freedom and responsibility are complete.

XXVI

“It is important to realise that the great crisis of existence is reached in the attainment of conscious individual life. Until that point is attained, nature takes care of matter, whether of the inorganic or organic world, whether belonging to the mineral, vegetable, or animal kingdom. Up to that moment there is no responsibility. When that point is reached responsibility commences. The ultimate fate of the living conscious individual depends upon itself.

“So far I have tried to lead you up to my belief, or rather my certainty, that man is immortal, and ‘master of his fate.’ One of the strongest proofs of immortality is afforded by the fact that men think they are immortal. Why should such an idea have ever entered into the mind of man? Everything he sees about him in the vegetable and animal kingdoms springs from the seed, lives, dies, resolves itself through corruption into its

elements. The deductive method is natural to man. All his theories originate in some observed fact. It is impossible to conceive of any actually original thought forming in the mind of man. Every thought is derived from experience. The mind of man is, and obviously must be in its nature, incapable of absolute creation. He cannot think a thought having no reference whatever to something or other of which he has become conscious through his senses. However overweening man's vanity may be, he could never have thought of existence after death had he not observed facts which led up to that thought. He might of course be faulty in his observation and mistaken in the thesis derived from it ; but without facts proving immortality to his satisfaction, the idea of immortality could not possibly have occurred to man.

“ The facts are ‘ spiritualism,’ which, as far as we know, has existed in some form or other from the beginning, and in some form or other exists now among all races of men.

“ Logic and reason point unerringly to immortality. Take the most purely materialistic view of creation. Assume that man

and everything in nature, that all things from the lowly mechanical movements of the merest film of animate matter to the conception of the mind of a Shakespeare, are but results of chemical combinations and chemical change, yet there is a something beyond that—something that we call life, vitality, something that makes the inanimate animate. I call it spirit. Call it life, it matters not. It is perfectly logical and reasonable to hold that the principle of life grows in complexity, and develops in proportion to the development and complexity of the matter it animates. It is logical and reasonable to hold that at a stage in the development of matter, the animating principle of life individualises; that whereas in the lower stages of the progress of matter the vital principle goes back, on the decay of matter, unconscious into the common stock, it becomes a conscious separate portion of the common stock when matter has reached higher stages of development, and consequently it survives the decay of matter. Persistence of Individuality has been thus won by Evolution. It is in accordance with the analogy of developing matter, as observed in the material world, that the

principle, call it what you will, that makes alive should progress by development ; otherwise this vital principle would be unchanging and unchangeable, a something in everlasting equipoise, and that is inconceivable. It is impossible to imagine how in its development it can avoid arriving at consciousness and individuality.

“ Reasoning inductively man *ought* to be immortal. Have not the aberrations of the heavenly bodies led to many discoveries of facts to account for them ? Imagine some being scrutinising man from a distance, what would he say ?

“ ‘ I see and observe this creature. I know what he is made of. I note that he is born, grows, perpetuates his species, dies, decays, dissolves into his elements. I perceive that he has his being, thinks and acts in obedience to certain impulses resulting from certain chemical changes going on within him, impulses dictated by his environment, and the passions inherent in him. But he moves mentally in an unaccountable manner ; he has a belief in his survival that no observed facts will account for. He does not revolve steadily round pure materialism as a point ;

on the contrary, his orbit is eccentric in the extreme. A cause must exist. What is the force that thus attracts him ? ’

“ Then to closer scrutiny, and clearer eye, the fact of spiritualism—in the larger sense—would reveal itself ; and our observer would cry ‘ *Eureka* ; I have found it, this accounts for all ! ’

“ Take it the other way. Anyone having the main facts of human existence, spiritualism among them, and sitting down to construct man therefrom, as natural historians construct an animal from a few bones, would say, among other things :

“ ‘ This creature was convinced that it did not perish at physical death. Given a true presentment of the mental attitude and movements of mankind, and you must find spiritualism to account for them. Given spiritualism, you can construct a true picture of the mental attitude and movements of man ; and without it you cannot.’

XXVII

“ And now as to the development of man.

“ In speaking of him I shall not attempt to enumerate his natures, or consider whether he has or has not a material body, an astral body, an animal soul, a human soul, a spirit, a spiritual soul, one or more natures ; but, for convenience, I will assume him to be composed of three parts, Body, Mind and Spirit.

“ Development is through three stages, the Physical, the Intellectual, and the Spiritual.

“ There is nothing purposeless, causeless, or inconsequential in nature. The primary purpose being the preservation of the human body enveloping the embryonic spirit, man first developed himself physically in order to resist causes of danger, namely, the hostility of the material environment of his body. As a consequence he created considerable obstacles to the growth of his intellectual and spiritual faculties. For long ages man was occupied principally in encouraging the physical attributes of strength, agility, endurance, courage ; and individuals improved

and the race progressed on that plane, under the beneficent action of the law of natural selection. Even now, when the superiority of intellectual force over brute force is generally recognised, we cling tenaciously to former estimates of excellence and admire all manifestations of physical strength. Especially is this the case among the majority of women. The conservative instinct is stronger among them than among men. They have outgrown the actual condition of dependence upon physical strength; but have not yet emancipated themselves from the habit engendered by dependence. While professing reverence for intellectuality, culture, and moral excellence, physical force is still the usual object of their secret adoration.

XXVIII

“No line of division exists between the three planes, the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. They overlap and cross each other. Ages ago the advantages of intellect became evident. The man who, in addition to physical strength, possessed intellectual activity—of a low order it is true—cunning

to outwit, skill to devise, fertility of resource, reason to forecast results by recollection of the consequences of similar causes, was a superior man. Progress in this direction has been delayed through the interference of civilisation with the law of natural selection, and on account of the conservative female habit of thought already alluded to. The male is inclined to revert to those types which please the female. But great advance has been made ; and the first place of honour is generally conceded to force of intellect. This transference of respect from the more purely physical to the intellectual will increase with rapidly increasing momentum, and the former nature runs some risk of becoming atrophied.

“ We are in a transition state. Numberless human beings are still, in matters of enjoyment especially, living purely on the material plane. But we can look back with satisfaction on the known and surmised past history of the race. Progress, though marked by retrogressive movements, and even violent dislocations, has, on the whole, been continuous and great. And why ? Because it has been comparatively easy. The advantages of in-

tellect in the struggle for life were self-evident almost from the beginning. The advantages of intellectual over material enjoyment were not so apparent, and have been proportionately slow in substantiating themselves. But, on the whole, the advance of man along the line leading from the material to the intellectual has been, and is, conducted with little friction, struggle, or pain. Not so will be the progress from the intellectual to the spiritual plane. And this is in accordance with the universal law of nature, that progress, in its initial stages, is easy, and becomes difficult in proportion as it advances to more complex and superior forms.

XXIX

“ In thinking of the spiritual it must be borne in mind that spirituality has not necessarily any connection with morals. It is true that after a point, with which we are not now concerned, spirituality develops in terms of morals. But up to a point spirituality can develop equally in the direction of either what we call good or bad. All that concerns us, at present, is the growth of one

of man's natures—spirituality ; and that is no more connected with morals than is the growth of his intellectual or material attributes.

“ Here we must consider the overlapping and crossing, and consequently the hostility, of the planes.

“ The difficulty in the path of spiritual progress consists in the fact that the plane preceding—namely, intellectuality—is hostile to it ; far more hostile than is the next preceding—the physical plane. Spiritual development is easier to the natural man, that is to say, the man on the purely physical plane, than to the man far advanced on the intellectual plane. The mist created by actions resulting from the physical nature is not so dense as is the fog engendered by impulses of an intellectual order. Pride in intellectual strength is an insuperable barrier to spiritual development ; pride in physical strength is not. It must not, however, be supposed that man would have progressed faster on spiritual lines if he could have altogether skipped the intellectual plane. The intellectual is absolutely necessary. The physical man can advance spiritually up to a

certain point only. This stage of development can be studied in existing races of men. Beyond that stage he could not possibly progress without the intervention of intellectuality. That phase of development cannot be studied in any existing race—the most intellectual races being, unfortunately, the least spiritually developed. It can be witnessed only in rare individual specimens of man. We are in the initial developmental stage of intellectual spirituality.

XXX

“ Physical and intellectual life are, in all their phenomena, their energy, their action, confined to bodily human life ; not, of course, in their consequences, but in their action on external nature. When the natural body dies they cease. The action and reaction of the spirit is coincident with spiritual existence. Its habitat is the real, not the phenomenal world—the spirit world, the world of relations and consequences. It is ill at ease in the incongruous surroundings of bodily life. When the natural body dies, the activity of the spirit takes a bound. Hence it is, to a considerable extent, at variance with the

body, and the relative difficulty it experiences in asserting itself through the physical and through the intellectual is in proportion to the resisting power of those natures. It is obvious that the strength of the intellectual is greater than the strength of the physical, and consequently spirit has far greater difficulty in dealing with the former than with the latter nature. Such will not always be the case. The present is a materialistic age. Speaking generally intellectual effort is, with the exception of that moving in lines of art, concentrated on the material world to the exclusion of the spirit. Almost all intellect is devoted to what is called practical purposes, sociology, politics, invention, trade, science. Brain energy is directed to searching into, classifying, utilising the physical constituents of the universe. The supreme science, Psychology, has been neglected until quite recently, and even now does not receive all the attention it deserves. Good will eventually result, for man must become acquainted with the physical bases of life and of his surroundings. But, in the meantime, intellectual development concentrated upon physical knowledge and claiming to account for all the

phenomena of existence, resents anything that tends to place it in a subordinate position. Pride in his cultivated intelligence is an enemy with which man (in his spiritual development) has to contend. Yet he dimly acknowledges the unsatisfactory character of purely intellectual achievement. Every day the inadequacy of materialistic science as a solution of the main problems of existence is more and more clearly demonstrated to him by science herself. This must be so.

XXXI

“ Psychology is inseparately connected with biology. Considered separately their study involves the intellect in hopeless confusion. The problems of each can be solved only by reference to the facts of the other. Science, treating only of matter by analysis and synthesis, will and does, as it advances, find itself confronted more and more frequently with facts and phenomena which, lying outside matter, cannot be explained by reference to matter ; and which, appertaining to spirit, can be understood only by reference to spirit. Physical science will attempt to classify and

account for hypnotic phenomena and all the phenomena connected with what is called magnetism and mesmerism, and it will fail, a residuum insoluble by material scientific means will remain. Science will then be forced to deal with the residuum—all the phenomena resulting from the exhibition of psychic force and the use of psychic senses. Hitherto science has adopted the simple method of denying existence to facts she cannot materialistically account for. But the nihilistic attitude—mere negation—can no longer be maintained.

“Already the scientists, as well as the ‘vulgar profane,’ evince some desire to investigate the laws and constitution of our spiritual nature, and of its psychological surroundings. Timid orthodoxy, both in Science and Religion, casts shy glances in that direction; and when Science proper dares to look great problems boldly in the face, a great and general advance in spiritual progress will be made. It is hard for science to break through the tough fibre of intellectual pride, but she will do so—in time. Truth must prevail. Science will have to recognise facts, and having struggled hard and long to

force them to conform to a materialistic conception of life, she will be compelled in broken pride and with a contrite heart to admit the realities of spiritual life. The impetus given to all branches of human study will be so great, the accretion of force to human beings so enormous, the change in the relations of spiritual beings to man, of man to man, and to the organic and inorganic world about him, so complex, that we may well wonder whether the present race of man is capable of sufficient development to carry on the work.

“ This antagonistic attitude of trained intelligence is natural enough, for the boast of intellect is the supremacy of reason, and spirit does not act through reason ; it is intuitive. It works through senses and by means of media unknown or only vaguely apparent to science. In some respects the untutored savage is far in advance of the most cultivated scientific intellects of the day. The Red Indian, who, wrapped in a companion's blanket left with him for the purpose, sits down and becomes cognisant of the circumstances of that companion, five hundred or a thousand miles away, is utilising a natural means of communication immeasur-

ably superior to the material inventions of science. Science, to get out of the difficulty, denies the fact ; but it *is* a fact, and science will have to recognise and examine into and utilise it according to scientific method. Marvellous will be the advance of the race when that and kindred facts are recognised and investigated by cultivated men ; but in the meantime intellectualism is strongly opposed to spiritualism. Intellectual pride is the bar, and until that is broken down, and men become ‘as little children,’ no great progress in psychology can be made.

XXXII

“ It must not be supposed that, because the three natures—the material, intellectual, and spiritual—are hostile to each other, and because the latter one lies almost altogether outside the sphere of the former two, either nature can be successfully cultivated by neglecting the others.

“ An ideally perfect man would be one in whom the physical, intellectual, and spiritual were each and all developed to the highest degree compatible with human animal life.

“ Cultivation of one to the exclusion of other natures produces atrophy and results in a cripple. The individual who concentrates attention on the physical to the exclusion of the intellectual is a cripple ; and he who also neglects the spiritual is doubly paralysed. The man who, saturated with the worst of all vanity, intellectual pride, despises the physical, is a cripple ; and if he also ignores the spiritual, he, too, is doubly paralysed. And the same is equally true of the human creature who cultivates only the spiritual side of his being. Nature, in her rough and ready way, avenges the outrage on this terrestrial sphere. Individuals and races in whom either the physical or the intellectual nature is suffered to decay, perish in the competition for animal life.

“ Man, being animal, should give fair play and action to the animal propensities, desires, passions. Man, being intellectual, should give fair play and action to the intellectual faculties. Man, being spiritual, should give fair play and action to the desires, functions, and attributes of the spirit. To be natural in all things is the fulfilment of the law.

“ Undoubtedly the spiritual is superior to

the intellectual, and the intellectual to the physical ; and where there is not room for all, the lower must give way to the higher form. But the spiritual cannot exist without the intellectual and the physical ; neither can the intellectual exist without the physical. It is man's duty to cultivate healthy conditions in all his natures.

“ Man is meant to be a healthy, happy, human animal. Full natural enjoyment of all modes of animal pleasure is right. Intemperance, over-indulgence, is harmful, and so, also, is asceticism and abstinence. But in all things the higher must control the lower nature. Spirit must govern intellect, and intellect govern the animal ; yet the animal, acting on its own true impulses, must, in its turn, react upon and influence the intellect ; and spiritual things must be submitted to reason. Man's natures are distinct but indistinguishable, acting and reacting upon each other, mutually controlling and being controlled. Harmony—a perfect balance and adjustment of forces—is the object to be attained.

“ Apart from the advantage it confers in the struggle for physical existence, the superiority of the intellectual over the material

consists in this. Its attributes outlast the physical life. This world is the unreal, the objective, the world of effects. The next world is the real, the subjective, the world of cause and consequence.

“ Man is, we are told, what he thinks. That is true to some extent in this world and to a greater extent in the next. What we call “the next world” is as substantial to us in that phase of existence as what we call “this world” is to us in this phase of existence. But man possesses creative faculties. He, to a large extent, makes his future as he goes along ; and his future is not limited by physical death. His next world is affected by his every thought and act in this world. Action is the precipitation of thought. Sow a thought, reap an act. ‘ Sow an act, reap a habit ; sow a habit, reap a character ; sow a character, reap a destiny.’ Of course consequence commences here, and cause continues there ; but the broad distinction between the two worlds is correct.

“ The animal attributes are confined to animal existence. With the death of the animal body the possibility of animal enjoyment ceases. If the animal life has been

normal and natural no inconvenience is felt by the emancipated soul, for desire also perishes with the body which originated it. But the desire does not of necessity perish. It remains where the animal propensities have been over-cultivated. In such a case the 'Ego,' the real man, finds himself in a purely animal world of his own creation, but without a body capable of being a vehicle of any animal enjoyment—a condition most horrible to contemplate. His only possibility of attempting to satisfy the cravings of diseased and unsatisfiable desire, lies in vicarious enjoyment through the bodies of those still living on the physical sphere. The earth is thronged with low, animalised, earth-bound spirits, struggling to find expression for their lusts through the media of the physical bodies which they can approach and influence. Like attracts like. In the living drunkard the dead drunkard finds the echo of a beastly joy. In the dead drunkard the living drunkard finds a hidden accomplice, the strongest incentive to his sin, the greatest obstacle to the assertion of his self-control.

XXXIII

“ With intellectuality the case is different. Its attributes do not perish with the physical body that originated them. The emancipated spirit, provided always it be sufficiently mature, can, in the spiritual surroundings created by itself, find full and, indeed, infinitely extended employment for the faculties it had cultivated on earth. In its greater possibility, therefore, of extension consists the superiority of what we rightly term the ‘ higher ’ over what with justice is styled the ‘ lower ’ nature of man. But mark ! it is possibility of extension only. Nature is inexorably just and favours none. The man who cultivates the lower to the exclusion of the higher bodily faculties is fearfully punished in the inevitable consequences of his own act. No matter how developed the spirit in him may be, no gratification of its acquired tastes is possible in spirit life. It is potent for mischief in proportion to its strength ; that is all. The man who cultivates the higher bodily to the total exclusion of the spiritual faculties is punished also. His undeveloped spirit lacks the means, the necessary senses, the

spiritual limbs and nerves, wherewith to translate his wish into action. He has the potentiality, but has not the power of intellectual enjoyment. He, too, is filled with infinite longing and unsatisfiable desire.

“That is, I think, all I have to say on the natures of man and his evolution. It will be seen that creation, obeying the fundamental law of its being—progress—the evolution of the spiritual molecule through matter towards the universal spirit, rises from the inorganic to the organic, struggles up into consciousness, responsibility, free will—which are but various terms for the same thing—and culminates, as far as this earth is concerned, in the complex, partly animal, partly spiritual creature, man.”

XXXIV

“Your theory has, I admit,” said Harry, “the merit of simplicity, and, for that reason, commends itself to me. It substitutes orderly progression and natural law for the black despair of materialism or the ignoble conception of constant interference on the part of an autocratic but somewhat baffled Creator. And, granting the truth of your premise that

all things are by involution and evolution, it appears quite logical to me. But what proof have you that your premises are correct ? ”

“ Proof positive is impossible of attainment,” Tom answered. “ I cannot mathematically demonstrate anything of the nature of cause. Every view of creation and existence lands us ultimately in the unknowable. But I claim for my theories that they offer a reasonable hypothesis of existence, that they are logically deducible from facts, that they never conflict with reason or with the loftiest conception of existence, creation, and God, and that they are thoroughly consistent with all we know of both physical and psychical phenomena.

“ What is the meaning of creation ? The return of spirit to its original source. What else can it be ? Is not that thesis consistent with all we know of creation, and with all we deem it possible we may ever know ? Creation may be meaningless ? I confess at once my inability to grasp that idea. It is impossible for my mind to conceive of purposeless anything ; as impossible as to conceive of existing nothing, or of something non-existent. The *purpose* is the *thing*. Nothing can occur

or be without cause. Let me start from the beginning. I can reason back from cause to cause *ad infinitum* till I am brought up sooner or later with the idea of a First Cause. I use the expression 'idea' because some expression must be used. But in truth I have no idea of a First Cause, it is simply inconceivable to me. A cause without a cause is to the human being an impossibility. The conception of an endless chain of cause and resulting cause is equally impossible and more revolting to the human intellect. I take refuge, therefore, in admitting what is unthinkable, a 'First Cause.' That First Cause *must* be spiritual, intelligent, and purposeful, for if you analyse your conception of an unintelligent First Cause consisting of matter in its ultimate form you will be compelled to admit the existence of something preceding and external to it producing the phenomena of matter. Analyse your conception of an intelligent First Cause till reason reels, and you must admit that, though inconceivable, unthinkable, it accounts for all we know and all we can imagine to be knowable. It is useless and foolish, and worse than useless and foolish, to trouble ourselves about at-

tempting to define a First Cause, Eternity, and Space, and other expressions which can convey no meaning to us. Equally silly is it to endeavour to understand a First Cause, and wonder whether creation was voluntary or involuntary, is itself the First Cause or a resultant of it. Of course, I am assuming that, for all practical purposes of conversation and argument, phenomena are real in the ordinary sense, that you and I and the world and the universe exist. You can stop me dead short by asserting that the whole thing is a dream. That may be ; but if so, the dream must be taken as a reality, for it certainly is not our dream. We are not the dreamers but the dreamed. We are in it, of it, beyond it, bound by its circumference, tied by its constitutional limitations, and we must treat of it as a reality.

“ To form any conception of life, nature, universe, we must build upon something. We must say, ‘ Let there be a First Cause and Creation.’ On that foundation we can, by observation and reason, erect certain axioms. That the First Cause, which I prefer to designate as ‘ God,’ is absolute, is perfection, all-good, all-power, all-knowledge, all-exist-

ing, all-present. That creation must be relative, imperfect, otherwise it would *be* God, and, therefore, as creation, non-existent. That, God being perfect, creation is as perfect as possible without being God. That creation is the evolution of spirit through matter to its source, or shall I say to itself, God. On those theses, and on those alone, can any reasonable theory of observed phenomena be formed. Not only does the evolutionary theory logically account for all phenomena within our cognisance, it is positively forced upon us by all the facts, forces, analogies of nature. It is writ in characters so large that even he who runs can scarcely fail to read. For instance, how instructive is embryology ! What a marvellous presentment of the history of life is traced by every being born into this world ! Evolution from the lowest form of life—a mere film of protoplasm, to the highest form of terrestrial life—the human being, not merely exemplified, but actually passed through by each one of us ! So it will be found, when knowledge is more advanced, that the whole evolution of spirit occurs epitomised, condensed, in the brief span of earth-life ; and we shall better understand

the cause of what we know to be a fact, namely, the necessity of earth-life to spiritual evolution.

XXXV

“ To what, think you, are the great human natural impulses due ? What are the main-springs of animal existence, and what are they for ? Preservation of self-life is the strongest of all impulses, and next to it the desire to perpetuate life. Why ? ‘ Oh ! ’ you will say, ‘ that is perfectly natural. Nature, though wastefully careless of the individual, is very careful of the type. It is in the scheme of nature that life should not cease, and that it should be differentiated in various types.’ As a matter of fact, you would be scarcely correct, for nature, as generally understood, does not trouble herself much about either individual or type. Types are formed, flourish and decay, as individuals are formed, flourish and decay, according to their adaptability to conditions. The perpetuation or failure of the type is the consequence of action or inaction of the individual, and why should it be in the scheme of nature that life should not cease, and that the strongest impulses of the individual should be to make forms of life

and to preserve life? The most powerful natural instincts of man are to breathe, to eat, to drink. Why? 'Because,' you will say, 'it is exceedingly painful to suffocate or starve.' True; but proceed a step further: why is it painful? There is but one reasonable reply.

"Next in order among man's animal instincts is the desire to perpetuate his kind. Why? 'Because it affords him pleasure.' Be it so. But again I say why? It cannot be denied that nearly all natural phenomena of pain throughout the whole of creation are directly traceable to the necessity inherent in animal life to preserve and perpetuate itself. Then without a sufficient cause for these instincts they must, I submit, be considered as the result of mere wanton cruelty—an excessively bad joke perpetrated by a creator entirely devoid of feeling, good taste, and humour. But the cause is plain and sufficient.

"These strong instincts are, as you say, natural. Yes; but nature never acts without purpose. What is the stupendous purpose that has imparted such an impulse to these instincts in man? Animal life is a necessity for the spirit, and out of this urgent necessity

of spirit has grown the imperious desire of the flesh to supply it. Spiritual monads are crowding into terrestrial existence, craving to go through that phase of development, for they cannot evolve without it, and suitable living forms must be provided. Earth-life, the joint life of animal and spirit, is as necessary a preliminary to separate spiritual existence as is the joint life of mother and child to the separate existence of the human animal. That animal life should last out its natural term is advisable for the development of the enclosed spirit to be born at physical death, in the same way as it is advantageous for the animal born at physical birth that the full period of gestation should be fulfilled. In this way and in no other way can the all-powerful impulses towards preservation and generation be accounted for.

XXXVI

“ Ah ! but you, in your turn, say, ‘ Why ? Why is it necessary for spirit to be evolved through matter ? ’ There you have me. I do not know. Why is there anything ? I cannot tell. I started, remember, on the as-

sumption that there is an intelligent First Cause ; that there is a visible creation ; that creation is the evolution of spirit through matter. Without these premises you can surmise nothing, know nothing, explain nothing, account for nothing. With them you can know much, account for much, surmise everything, and, among other puzzles, can give a sufficient, rational, logical explanation of the chief phenomena of existence and mainsprings of life, self-preservation, and the perpetuation of the race. And to return to that point for a moment ; is it not noteworthy how nature seems to force the value of spirituality in existence upon us ? What can be more purely instinctive, earthly, animal, than generation in the vegetable and animal kingdoms ? Yet it is an absolute necessity for the spirit, and so keenly alive to this is the spirit, and so determined to be grateful—if I may use the term—that it seizes the very first opportunity (that is, its development into conscious individualised intelligence in man) to transform a merely earthly desire into the most spiritualised, ennobling passion that the complex creature, man, can feel. Love, real love, throws much light upon

animal and spiritual action, reaction, and interaction on this physical plane."

Tom ceased speaking, and the friends were silent. But it was evident that he had more to say.

"You have left us nowhere," said Harry.

"Do you wish me to conduct you any further?" replied Tom. "If so, let us stroll to and fro on this soft sward awhile. Exercise stimulates the brain to think." And as the three friends rose and walked in the summer night beneath the stars, Tom continued meditatively :

THE THIRD WATCH

XXXVII

“**S**PIRITUAL development is in no sense necessarily co-extensive with moral excellence. The spirit is free to grow in the direction of its choice. The iteration and force of morals will be spoken of in another connexion.

“Whether spirit is in inorganic matter, I know not. If inorganic matter is lifeless, then it is spiritless also ; but on the former point the last word of science has not yet been said. Spirit is coincident with life. Spirit may brood over and act upon inanimate things, but it is not inherent in them. The vegetable kingdom is alive, and it is also suffused with spirit, but with spirit not yet individualised. Spirit becomes individualised when a living creature becomes self-conscious, when it knows that it *is*. The point at which that is arrived at in the animal kingdom I do not

know, nor does it much signify in an inquiry into man.

“To the natural man—the savage—the existence of the spiritual nature presents no difficulty whatever. He is cognisant of it in others, and perceives it in himself as plainly and perfectly as he sees their material bodies, and is aware of his own. It has been reserved for misdirected intellect to become blind to the infinitely greater part of man’s nature. The natural man, who in some spiritual respects is wiser than we are, attributes individualised spirit of some kind to all objects, whether inorganic or organic. For this reason he buries with the dead warrior his household goods, utensils, weapons, horse and dog, and makes him offerings of food ; not, as is vulgarly supposed, because he attaches any importance to the articles or animals themselves, but because he believes their spirits will be useful to the spirit of the dead. He holds that though we come naked into the world we can take things out of it with us. This phantasy is very natural. To him the dividing line between the material and spiritual spheres is very indistinct. He knows that the spiritual body of his dead continues

to exist to all appearance the same. He has visions of the spirit world, and sees that it is analogous to this world, and contains horses and hounds, bows and arrows, pots and pans. All the features of this organic and inorganic world are to him represented in the spirit world ; and, reasoning by analogy, he concludes that, as the man he sees is the spirit of his departed friend, therefore the other animate or inanimate objects he beholds are the spirits of objects that have existed in this world. But he is mistaken, at least as regards lifeless forms. What he sees is a separate creation subjective to his bodily eyes. Whether the living forms in the other world, all or any of them, consist of the spirits of animals that have had life on earth, or whether they are the creation of our own will, or a separate creation of the Creator's, I do not know.

“ The spirit of man, *the* man, the ‘ Ego,’ acts in the spirit world upon external, spiritual, and material objects by spiritual senses and means. While in the material body it acts upon spiritual and material things external to itself by both spiritual and physical senses and means. All that the disembodied spirit can do is possible for the in-

carnate spirit to do ; but difficult in proportion as the body clogs and impedes spiritual effort. A man strips as near to the skin as decency permits to row in a boat-race. He could also row clad in long sea-boots, a heavy ulster, and a sou'-wester, but not so well. To accomplish equal results the strength and skill of the man incommodiously clothed must be proportionately greater than the muscular and technical development of the naked man. So, though it is possible for all the phenomena of spiritualism to be performed by the embodied spirit, it is difficult, and the necessary power is rarely attained.

XXXVIII

“Spirits disembodied operate upon the matter of this material world in a long series of phenomena ranging from tilting and rapping upon tables to materialisations of various kinds. They partially create. Out of existing atoms of suitable matter they can form an object perfectly material and apprehensible by all the ordinary bodily senses of sight, touch, hearing, smell ; and they can disintegrate and resolve material objects into

particles of matter. By exercising exceptional opportunities of observation, they can acquire knowledge not ordinarily accessible, and are thus able to forecast events. They can impart their knowledge to men still in the flesh, and can in various ways influence both the incarnated spirit and the incarnating body. These constitute the ordinary phenomena of spiritualism.

“ With spirit existence in the spirit world we have at present nothing to do ; but one faculty of an exalted kind—prophecy—may be mentioned. Spirits can foretell. All act is, as has already been stated, the precipitation of thought. Every event occurring on this physical, objective, unreal plane is the result, the shadow, the precipitation of that event occurring on the spiritual, subjective, real plane. In perceiving an occurrence, the spirit sees it before, to us, it really occurs. The interval, measured in our time, between the real occurrence in the subjective and the image occurrence in the objective world may be considerable. This must be spiritually apprehended, for explanation of phenomena of no-time in terms of time is obviously impossible. The nearest analogy in physical

terms, and terms of times, may be this. Thought travels with infinite rapidity—far more rapidly than light. Imagine an instrument so delicate and powerful that an occurrence on a star so distant that a ray of light occupied one hundred years in travelling from it to us was made perceptible to an observer on earth when the ray reached here. The observer here would perceive the event one hundred years after it had occurred. Suppose another spectator capable of projecting his perception to that star and back, he would perceive the event practically at the time it occurred, and could prophesy of the event one hundred years before it happened. The analogy is, of course, imperfect, but contemplating it may help us dimly to grasp how it is that high spiritual beings can prophesy. They possess no unnatural or supernatural power. They do not know what has not happened, but is going to happen. They do know what has happened and what will appear to us to happen at some future time in this material world.

XXXIX

“The existence and activity of the incarnated spirit is usually manifested in intuition, impression, inspiration, visions, clair-audience, clairvoyance, and conscious or unconscious self-projection out of the body. These manifestations of the spirit are wrought by purely natural means and in a perfectly natural way ; by the employment of the ordinarily recognised senses, and of bodily senses at present rudimentary, and therefore not usually apparent in man ; and by the use of spiritual senses. The spirit acts through the bodily limbs and nervous system, through a body which possesses senses and faculties at present undeveloped ; and through the spiritual limbs and nervous system—if I may use the term. All these occult faculties and powers are capable of great development. But it must not be supposed that spiritual growth can be accurately measured by the psychological powers exhibited. A well-developed spirituality may be unable to find any expression, in terms of this life and this world, by reason of infirmity or natural inaptitude on the part of the physical body

through which alone such expression can be found.

“The first indication of spiritual growth lies in cognition. When man begins to feel that he has a spirit, his spiritual growth must be considerable. When he fully realises that he not only has but *is* a spirit—that the spirit is the real he himself, the responsible being, the *Ego*, he is fairly well advanced ; and when he acts upon that certainty he has progressed probably as far as is possible, or as far as is advisable for him during earth-life. He is ‘ready to depart.’

“For the civilised man to reach this point is not so easy as may appear. Attainment is possible only after control over the purely animal instincts has been acquired, and upon complete triumph over the most stubborn of all known diseases, intellectual pride. To the physically centred man it is not so difficult. The recognition of spirituality does not conflict so bitterly with the pride of life, or even with the lusts of the flesh. To the man who plumes himself upon his physical strength and all its attributes, powers, and enjoyments, the knowledge that he is a spirit, though it may be uninteresting, produces no shock.

It does not interfere with his conception of life. But to intellect, directed as it unfortunately too often is in purely materialistic and consequently anti-spiritualistic lines, the recognition of spirit is abhorrent. It revolutionises all preconceived ideas of existence. It causes a great revulsion and conveys a painful surprise."

XL

"But surely," Harry interrupted, "spiritual cognition is inseparable from spiritual existence ; and if a man has a spirit and is immortal he knows it ; and if he does not know it he has no spirit and perishes at death—however advanced in all other respects he may be ? "

"That is not so," Tom answered. "Your theory that spiritual growth during earth-life, sufficient to convince man of his spiritual existence, is necessary for immortal life, and that without that conviction man perishes at physical death, is held by many, and passages in Scripture have been quoted in favour of it. But it is not so. Annihilation does not occur on this sphere at any rate, and I do not

think it ever does. Spirit is indestructible, and once individualised how can the individuality be destroyed? Every human being is born at death; born more or less unconscious or conscious, more or less unformed or formed, according to the spiritual growth accomplished in earth-life.

“Spiritual cognition merely marks a phase of progress, but a considerable one. When that is supplemented by acknowledgment of the superiority of spirituality a further marked advance is made; and when to that is added a conception of life founded upon and governed by that knowledge, the man enters upon spirit life with his faculties sufficiently formed to enable him to adapt himself to the circumstances of that existence. They are, he will probably find, not entirely novel and inconceivable to him. He starts, as it were, in a position which it may take the unformed man painful ages of our time to reach.

“Though the possession of psychological powers may be entirely absent, it is rarely the case that a man, having arrived at spiritual cognition, passes through life without some exhibition, however slight, of the

play of spiritual forces within him. The media of expression of these forces can be cultivated by exercise, as can all other functions and faculties of the body and mind. But it is not always wise to do so. Such development of the incarnated spirit, or rather of the means of communication and manifestation of the spirit, as brings it, and of necessity its physical body also, into close contact with disembodied spirits is attended with danger ; and unless the man is in his physical, intellectual, and spiritual natures well armed with health, reason, will power, and moral force, the danger may be grave and the results bad.

XLI

“ From the cradle to the grave we are surrounded by good, bad, and indifferent spiritual influences, and the effect producible upon our lives by their passive or active interference may be very great. Much that, in our ignorance, we call chance, circumstance, fate, is due to their action, and much also that in our vanity we claim as spontaneous is in reality attributable to them.

Their action is upon the physical body direct, upon the embodied spirit direct, and upon the material body through the medium of the inhabiting spirit. Their method of action is by suggestion, fascination, impression, inspiration, physical manifestation. They operate purposely and sometimes unintentionally ; and we may be conscious or unconscious of the influence exerted, and of the effect produced. Whether the effect produced upon us by the impact of influences be good or bad depends upon the nature of the influences.

“ The character of our spiritual surrounding is determined by the law of affinity, natural or acquired. Similar flies to similar. Our spiritual environment is, therefore, a projection of ourselves. But two modifying factors come into operation, namely, affection and duty. Until the echo of life's harmonies and discords has melted away, the love, affection, interest born to us in earth-life continue to exert themselves. Those spirits who feel responsibility towards us on account of their earth actions, endeavour to discharge that duty—they must for their own peace of mind ; and spirits who can best make atone-

ment and restitution for some faults committed—not necessarily against us—by assisting us in difficulties of a similar kind, endeavour also to discharge that duty for their own sake. Those who, in earth-life, were interested in us, continue to feel the same interest after death. Affection is not limited by the grave. Love does not perish in physical dissolution. The spiritual forces, therefore, that constantly act and react upon a man are mainly determined by the condition of his own nature in all its aspects, and by the character of those who have preceded him into the spirit-life and who are attached to him by ties of affection, of heredity, and of natural or acquired relationship. The analogy between spirit-life and earth-life is perfect. As before stated, there is no difference in kind between the action of the disembodied and the action of the embodied spirit. We are influenced by our relations and connections on earth, we select congenial companions, and are selected. The difference is one of degree. The influence of the spirit is infinitely strengthened by release from the inconvenient wrapping of the flesh. Where the influence is bad our ignorance of its

very existence gives an immense advantage to the malignant spirit. Not recognising their source, we are easily deluded into attributing our impulses, thoughts, and actions to chance, circumstance, fate, our own nature, to any cause, in fact, except the true one—namely, the subordination of our own will to the will of another human being.

XLII

“ Another law of the spiritual world affects environment. The nomenclature of this objective world is of course utterly inapplicable to conditions of the subjective sphere ; but, as no other means of expression are available, such terms of time and space as ‘ before ’ and ‘ after,’ ‘ higher ’ and ‘ lower ’ must be used.

“ The character of the human denizens of the spiritual world is of course similar to the character of the human inhabitants of this world, and is good, bad, and indifferent—chiefly the latter. There are not many actively wicked people in this world or in the next. Most of them are thoughtless, shallow-minded, frivolous, mischievous, deceitful,

vain. Infinite mischief may be wrought by a spirit by no means actively bad.

“ In the spirit world, in its relations to this world, a natural process is constantly at work. The higher forms rise towards the top ; the lower remain at the bottom. Unless earth-bound by some strong tie of interest or affection, or by some self-imposed task, or by some mission entrusted to them, advanced spirits quickly pass beyond earth attractions and exercise little or no direct influence upon earth. The conditions are intolerable to them ; their natural interests lie in other directions. It is difficult for them to manifest in earthly terms, or to influence earthly objects.

XLIII

“ As regards effects to be produced on earthly objects, the lowest, grossest, most material, most earth-tied spirits have the greatest power. The spiritual stratum with which man comes most immediately in contact is the lowest of the spiritual formation, and it consists, to a considerable extent, of those who, having neglected to develop their

spirituality, and having devoted themselves solely to the cultivation of their animal and intellectual natures, have created for themselves a subjective world as closely as possible resembling this objective world. They cling to earth because earth-life affords them the only conception of life they can understand ; and, being necessarily incapable of animal enjoyment in themselves, they are frantically anxious to obtain what enjoyment is possible to them in and through the bodies of others. They select their victims, magnetise them, make them act by suggestion, fascinate them, and may even finally obsess them. The condition of an obsessed man is most deplorable. His judgment is perverted, his will paralysed, his body utilised, his spirit controlled. He is no longer himself. In the truest and most appalling sense he is an abject slave ; and without the assistance of some strong and friendly will power or spiritual force his freedom cannot be regained. Similar results may be and are produced by precisely similar means by embodied spirits, but the danger is not in that case so great. To be impressed, a willing or at any rate a negative state of mind is necessary. It is

difficult to hypnotise or mesmerise people against their will ; practically impossible to do so without their knowledge. We can be on our own guard against fellow-creatures in the flesh. Not so when the hypnotisers or mesmerisers are spirits. They can act without our knowledge, and, in ignorance of their presence and intentions, they find the necessary passive condition of a subject's will.

XLIV

“ Disembodied spirits are, roughly speaking, all equally impressionable. Not so embodied spirits. The measure of the capacity of these latter for receiving impression is determined largely by the nature of their physical bodies. In some the physical nature is so dense as to render them almost incapable of impression ; while others are influenced with ease by any spirit possessed of the necessary qualities.

“ The most easily impressed persons are those who, possessing little positive magnetism, are naturally negative and passive in character ; those in whom the spirit is laid unhealthily bare by reason of a bodily disease,

or a neurotic condition, and those who, though perhaps most positive in character and endowed with great power of will, are naturally inspirational. In the latter category all those who are intrusted with that glorious but perilous gift, an artistic nature, must be classed.

“ Under the first heading not much need be said. The more negative and passive is the condition of the subject the more easy is it for the object—the spirit operating—to control it. So much is self-evident in theory ; and in practice we find nearly all spiritualistic mediums included in that category. The average human being, endowed with an average amount of positive magnetism and will force, must, either voluntarily by self-imposed abstraction or involuntarily in sleep, be reduced to a condition of passive receptivity before he becomes open to impression.

“ Neither does the second heading require much explanation. In this material world the physical body is, as it were, the clothing, or rather the skin, of the man, protecting his delicate spiritual nerve and tissue from the intrusion of external forces possibly hostile to him. If this integument be torn or weak-

ened in texture the spirit is laid bare—becomes raw—to whatever comes in contact with it. If the indecently exposed spirit be highly developed in strength and purity it will be accessible only to pure and lofty intelligences, and the resulting phenomena will be good. But if, as is usually the case, the denuded spirit is of the common herd, undeveloped and more or less impure, it lies naked at the mercy of impure and undeveloped spirits, and the resulting phenomena will be bad. The condition of the weakly-bodied, neurotic, hyperæsthetic human being is dangerous. He is like a warrior thrust into the fight denuded of his arms of defence. Great moral purity will save him, as classical heroes were snatched out of danger by goddesses and gods. Failing that, he must take refuge in flight; he should shelter himself behind a better equipped comrade. He is not capable of standing alone.

“But under the third heading some explanation is necessary, I think. Of all temperaments the artistic is most to be envied and most to be dreaded. It may be the greatest blessing or the greatest curse. It entails terrible responsibilities. Its rewards

are magnificent, its dangers great. If the lowest degradation is potential in it, so is the highest elevation, for in art, and in art alone—which is human creation—is the faint shadow of Divine creation made manifest on earth.”

XLV

“Before you go any further,” said Harry, “tell us, What do you mean by art ? There is much difference of opinion on that point.”

“True ; and mistaken opinion, for art is vulgarly regarded as only a superior exhibition of the imitative faculty. Of course art is and must be imitative, for at its best it is the creation of the created ; and its highest aim is to approach the creation of the Creator. The brain of man is incapable of conceiving any substance, form or colour unrepresented in Nature ; all sentiments and emotions displayed in his work are but vibrations of God’s work, and however suggestive a work of art may be, it falls far short of its natural prototype in unfolding power. But by Art you are to understand not the imitative faculty merely, but conception in the spiritual and bodily brain of an idea which is more or less

successfully precipitated into objective form in music, literature, the drama, and the pictorial and plastic arts. That is creation as far as creation can be carried out under human conditions on this material sphere ; and in its quality it is akin to God. The real creative act is of course the conception of the idea, but that does not wholly constitute creation. Without the will power necessary to form the idea into material shape the creation is abortive. Divine creative power, in its intensity of longing, formed the material world and universe. Human creation, to be creation, must obey the irresistible craving to form something, and must find material expression in chords of harmony, in a poem, a statue, a picture, or perchance a vase. Some have contended that the critic *per se* is an artist. That is absurd, for, to a man who has not created something, art is intellectual only. No creation without art, no art without creation. No art without the primary idea, but equally no art without the materialisation of that idea.

XLVI

“Occasionally the creative faculty may exist, though, owing to some extraordinary combination of circumstances, outward expression, creation complete, has been denied. But such cases are very rare. Mute, inglorious Miltons might in truth be sought for practically in vain. Of all idiotic conceptions, that of literature being the highest form of art is the chief. Higher and lower cannot exist in art. Art is art, and incapable of degrees of comparison. It is an abstraction. One expression of art may be more educational than another, but that even is rather a question of the mood or temperament it appeals to and draws out than incidental to any peculiarity of the art-form itself. But literature is the clumsiest of all attempts to give form to the inexpressible feelings of man. What is literature? The soul-longing in man strives to solidify into an idea; the idea struggles into consistency as a thought, and finds vent in articulated sound; that sound is transposed from vibration upon the ear to vibration upon the eye, by means of words composed of many arbitrary symbols; and

finally, the words are strung together in sentences and books. It is impossible to imagine a more cumbrous method of conveying meaning from one personality to another. No ; literature is a wonderful *craft* ; but it can scarcely be dignified as an *art*. Compare it with painting.

XLVII

“ Take any common subject you like, a sunset for instance. What does that convey ? First, the impression of a sunset ; and, secondly, all the subjective realities of thought feeling, emotion, that so beautiful a natural exhibition can evoke. No man has ever lived capable of writing a picture giving an adequate conception of the objective and subjective realities of a sunset. But many a man has done so with the brush. Music transcends every form of art in its reaction on the human body, mind and spirit. Music is perfectly simple in its method, which consists of mere vibrations on the human ear. Yet, with no model or counterpart in nature, it gives bodily pleasure or pain in its harmony or discord, mental enjoyment or suffering in a measure and to a degree that cannot be

approached by any other form of art. And it evokes, translates, and expresses emotions, joys, sorrows, aspirations, unutterable longings of the spirit in a manner unattainable by any other means. All that painting, sculpture, and poetry can do, music does also, and infinitely more. Music is above all art and all criticism of art.

XLVIII

“ Art is, with the exception of religion, the most complex and honourable of all exhibitions of human life. In it all the natures of man are concerned, and it is also external to man. Art without inspiration cannot be, and it can manifest only through a cultivated and developed spiritual, intellectual, and physical body. In the sphere of intellectuality it is the one noble exception to the ignoble rule under which the intellect has been devoted to the service of materialism alone. Art has kept alive the divine spark all through the deadly miasma of a grossly materialistic era ; and, whatever be its immediate fate, the immeasurable service of art to humanity will be recognised in a more spiritualised age.

“Intellectual development has, as has already been said, been actively hostile to growth of spirituality, except when moving in the lines of art. That is unavoidable, so long as science is based on the negation of spirit. All art is imbued with spirit, is derived from spirit, is more spiritual than intellectual in its higher forms. Without spirit art cannot be. Eliminate spirit and art becomes a trade, a handicraft. But art requires intellectual development and technical skill. The analogy with nature is complete. In man, the macroscope and microscope of life, we find the material, the intellectual, and the spiritual in an ascending scale, all mutually dependent, and all deserving loving care and cultivation. So in art is found the material—technical skill in manipulation; the intellectual—the true and accurate perception of effects on the part of cultured senses; and the spiritual—the subjective creation in the spiritual brain or the idea inspired by some spiritual influence external to it. The vast difference lies in this. Whereas intellect can dispense with spirit when travelling on the lines of trade, invention, or science, it cannot exist without it in

art. Spirituality is to art what life is to the animal ; without it is death, decay, corruption. And as out of corruption none but lower forms arise, so out of the rotten body of unspiritualised art dilettantism springs.

XLIX

“ Thus you will see that by the artistic temperament I mean not the nature of musical craftsmen, nor the patient copiers of landscape and form, nor those who thread sweet words rhythmically on vibrating strings of sound ; but those who, worshipping nature from afar, sympathising ever so feebly with her origin, feelings, and effects, are struck by the divine spark, are impregnated with idea, and are impelled by the irresistible compulsion of the inborn inspired living reality to give outward form and expression to it in some phase or shape of art.

“ The artistic temperament is, therefore, inspirational, that is, open to spiritual influx ; and being open at all, it is, of necessity, open to all kinds of spiritual intrusion. It is sensitive. Consequently, the temperament most fraught with danger is the artistic. Man can-

not divest himself of it ; but he can be upon his guard.

L

“ The besetting sin of this temperament is pride. This may appear strange, for knowledge of indebtedness to inspiration ought to lead to humbleness of mind. The vanity invariably accompanying an artistic temperament appears to have been evolutionally developed as a shield against the criticism and misunderstanding to which it is exposed, and as an antidote to that self-depreciation which, following on repeated shortcomings, might otherwise prove fatal to so sensitive a creature.

“ Pride is of all diseases the most dangerous. It is in the nature of it to render blind. Of necessity it is the one defect in ourselves we are least cognisant of. Our inability to see it is in exact proportion to the pride in us. It is often the fatal heritage of persons endowed with the highest faculties, especially of an artistic and intellectual order. Human beings so constituted fall an easy prey to deceptive spirits, who first pervert, and then annihilate the higher faculties. They trade upon the

pride that blinds us. Under its fatal bondage impulses that may lead to long years of regret are followed in ignorance of their origin, and are attributed to chance, or to the promptings of our own nature which, we are apt to believe, cannot be bad.

“ Then, indeed, unless latent virtue of the highest activity is alarmed into a frantic effort, or unless a sufficiently powerful counter-acting spiritual force is called in aid, complete bodily, mental, and spiritual subjection follows. The victim becomes the slave, not, as his pride delights in thinking, of inexorable fate, or of a nature for which he is not responsible, but of low, crafty, deceitful human spirits, with whom he would not for a moment associate in earth-life.

“ The brightest genius is pre-eminently *sane*, as, for instance—who shall I say?—Shakespeare or Goethe. But many of the world’s great men are said to have been neurotic. Socrates is supposed to have been cataleptic, Cæsar and Napoleon subject to epilepsy, and Pascal and Mozart distinctly neuropathic. The world is, at present, full of hysterical people, and they are exposed to danger because hysteria warps the intelligence,

judgment, and will. But with few exceptions they are not inspirational. Where genius is combined with a neurotic tendency—and by making inspiration possible neurosis is sometimes the cause of genius—the danger is very great, because genius is always inspirational, frequently intolerant, and difficult of guidance and restraint. The records of history are sad with numberless instances of genius gone to wreck and ruin ; wrecked through ignorance of the outlying rocks, and of the dangers inherent in itself, ruined for want of those precautions which a little knowledge would have supplied.

LI

“ But to come back to my leading theme. Man’s spiritual environment is composed, first, of the affinities of his inherited nature ; secondly, of the affinities of his educated nature ; thirdly, of those who, having been born into true life before him, seek to influence him out of affection, duty, or love ; and, fourthly, of influences which he invokes.

“ Except under the reincarnation theory, man is not responsible for his inherited nature or for the environment natural to it. Nor is

he responsible for the number, nature, and strength of those disembodied spirits who are tied to him by bonds of blood, affection, or duty. If his natural propensities are good his natural environment will be good ; so much the better for him. It is, of course, greatly to his advantage also to have many influential friends in the subjective world. But in truth we need not delude ourselves or seek to lay soft, flattering unction to our souls ; man is mainly responsible for his environment. Education, in its true sense, the drawing out of all three aspects of his nature from lower to higher standards, is really and truly the work of the individual. Of course, defective training is a disadvantage and sometimes a tremendous one, but not insuperable ; man is free to make himself, and consequently his environment, what he likes. Also he can invoke—call in—the assistance of such spiritual beings as he wishes to associate with. No difference, in these respects, save one of degree, distinguishes the objective material from the subjective spiritual world.

LII

“ It is a disadvantage to be born with weak or vicious hereditary taints, to be neglected in youth and to be associated with low companions. But even in relation to the things of this world man is free and can overcome ; and in respect of things appertaining to the spiritual he can do so with much greater ease. It is far easier to obtain the spiritual environment that we wish for, than the physical environment we may desire.

“ To the spiritual world we can never appeal in vain. Help is the immediate and inevitable consequence of the call for help. We are not compelled to accept spiritual associates uncongenial to us. Man’s spiritual environment is practically what he chooses it to be.

LIII

“ I have tried to show you in plain words how we are situated on this terrestrial sphere. Now let me examine into the dangers to which the human spirit is exposed on earth, the difficulties that stand in the way of its growth, and its means of self-development

and self-defence. And in this aspect of the case morals must be mentioned. Into the origin of moral sense and conscience, how far it is spiritual or physical, to what extent it is external or internal, a product of evolution or a separate principle, I cannot stop to inquire. I assume it to exist, to be both physical and spiritual in origin, and to consist of both the promptings of our own spirit and the suggestions of spiritual beings external to us.

LIV

“ All development of spirituality in the direction of manifestations, of the phenomenon constituting what is called ‘ spiritualism ’ is attended with danger to both body and spirit.

“ Mediumship can be cultivated, though to a slight extent only in all individuals. The attempt is usually unwise. Where the mediumistic faculty naturally exists, it can be used moderately without risk to the body, because the body is naturally adapted to it. Not so where the body must be made receptive. The physical body screens the spirit from other spiritual existences, and any effort

to break down the screen is apt to derange the bodily nervous functions—to a large extent, if the body is of a nervous, highly-organised temperament, and to a greater extent, of course, if the temperament is neurotic or hysterical. A natural medium possesses some bodily attribute which renders the body naturally open to spiritual influence. An ordinary human being does not. He is a bad conductor, whereas a medium is a good conductor of spiritual force, and in the latter case the danger of disturbing the nervous equilibrium of the body is small. All material manifestations are made by using the emanations of the physical bodies of those present, and the animal matter in the atmosphere. Such manifestations entail loss of vitality and waste of tissue to those who supply the operating spirit with the material necessary for their production. For these reasons psychological development of this kind is dangerous and should be attempted only by those in whom a well-balanced mind acts through a sound nervous system upon a physical body in good health.

“ And it is dangerous for deeper reasons. Development tends to make the incarnated

spirit more than ever sensitive to the influence of disembodied spirits. What is the general nature of this influence? Earthly, ignorant, sometimes deceitful, as has already been stated; and of that nature are the majority of messages and phenomena occurring through mediums on the material line. And in what frame of mind do people usually approach 'table-turning'? They look at a *séance* as a kind of joke, turn the subject into ridicule, or treat it frivolously. What kind of influences need they expect to hear from? Why, from the similars of their own frame of mind. They invite the lowest class of spirits to communicate with and influence them. It is strange, for the same people would not turn for company to Regent Street at night, or to Whitechapel public-houses.

"If a *séance* be undertaken at all, it should be undertaken in a most serious and guarded frame of mind, and the influence judged of by the style of the communications. If these are blasphemous, ribald, unclean, or frivolous have nothing more to say to them. Refuse to converse with spirits of that order. Evoke, concentrate your mind upon the spirits you wish to communicate with, and, in time, your

efforts will probably be rewarded with success ; but if you ask my advice, I say distinctly, leave it alone."

LV

"Then, as it seems to me," interrupted Dick, "you would forbid the examination of spiritualism ; you would treat it as witchcraft was treated, as a most dangerous thing."

"No, do not misunderstand me. I crave for light and ardently desire the investigation of psychological phenomena by competent persons. But I am timid in recommending to others a pursuit which may be harmful to them. Perhaps the note of warning I have sounded is too loud : yet there is danger in spiritualism, and all related subjects of occult science, and to some danger of the very gravest kind ; the danger of ignorance, be it always understood, the danger of meddling with forces we do not understand.

"Nevertheless, spiritualism throws a beauty, an interest, a consolation, across the web of life that cannot be described. Spiritualism convinces of this : that we continue to exist as conscious individuals after death ;

that death is but an episode in existence ; that our loves, hopes, aspirations, interests survive, and that we can and do take an active part in the affairs of this world after death. Consider what the reality, the realised fact of immortality and of communion with those gone before means ! Death is but a temporary separation, a pain of separation sweetened by many messages of love. Think of the vast consolation to be found in the equalising counterpoise of death ; the wrongs requited, and the crooked things made straight. Try and realise the sense of prolongation. We teach children, and it is irksome to them ; but, if wise, they learn because knowledge will be useful some day. Imagine the consolation of knowing that every scrap and particle of knowledge and observation will be available after death ; that nothing, neither natural decay, nor disease, nor accident, can rob us of the fruit if we but sow the seed. I am not a poet and I cannot describe. You must fill in the picture for yourselves. Spiritualism gives infinite endurance, courage, hope, if realised and believed in to the full.

LVI

“ And spiritualism teaches this—at least so I think—belief in God as the origin, belief in love as the means, belief in justice. To those unfortunates who lack a living faith, spiritualism is a gift beyond all price. And to those who do enjoy a living faith, a faith that orders and sustains their life, spiritualism is an aureole round their faith ; for faith is the evidence of things unseen and spiritualism is the evidence of faith. So by all means investigate, but with serious care if you are reasonable and strong ; but if you are doubtful of yourself, not in earnest, deficient in self-control, leave development on the lines of physical phenomena alone. And now let us turn to a more interesting theme, what is commonly called the subjective phase.

LVII

“ The development by a man of the senses, faculties, and powers inherent in his own spirit, and of the receptivity of his spirit to communion with other spirits of an exalted kind, is very different from the form of de-

velopment I have warned you against. Every man should endeavour to cultivate his powers and to develop himself in that way, with care and with moderation, be it well understood.

“ The first step in progress should be of a defensive character. The primary duty of the animal and intellectual body is to protect and nourish the inhabiting spirit. To undertake defensive operations at all, it is necessary to be aware of the existence of the enemy, and a true appreciation of its character, force, and disposition is advisable for their successful conduct.

LVIII

“ The fact that every human being is surrounded constantly by spiritual influences must be realised. Belief or unbelief makes no difference to the fact. They are about us and affecting us whether we are aware of it or not. But in our ignorance lies their opportunity. Unaware of the danger, we naturally make no effort to counteract it ; and are guarded only by the high spiritual influence of our guardian angel, and, if we are so fortunately situated, by superior spirits who are

attracted to us by natural ties of affinity or by the artificial bonds of affection. And in that case, too, co-operation is necessary. Neglect will, in obedience to inexorable natural law, drive the guardian angel far away, and want of harmony with them paralyses the efforts of superior spirits to influence us. Like seeks like, and affects it, and is affected by it.

“ The first step, therefore, is to recognise that we are surrounded by influences.

“ The second is to understand that, as a rule, the spirits closest to earth are not necessarily bad, but are usually low, undeveloped, of the earth earthy.

“ The third step is to calculate our resources ; to consider the character and quality of our natural friends and connections in the subjective world, and to endeavour to form an unbiassed opinion as to the nature of our affinities and the character of the spirits who would be attracted to us by our own character and life.

“ The fourth step is to understand that it is the duty as well as the joy of high spiritual beings to assist us. We are then in possession of the facts.

“ The next forward move consists in realising that we cannot stand still, that we must advance or recede, and that the direction and character of the movement can be decided only by ourselves, that our fate lies absolutely in our own hands.

“ We must learn to discriminate among spiritual influences, and must reject the unworthy. The incarnated spirit can at an early stage of development do this by means of its senses.

“ In the lower animal kingdom the creature, being guided by the sense of smell and taste, avoids what is unwholesome and dangerous with almost unerring certainty. Man, too, possesses the same gift, but atrophied in proportion as reason takes the place of instinct. Yet man is guided in dealing with man by subtle senses which he scarcely understands. Man feels the presence of hostile animal magnetism, and becomes aware of instinctive likes and dislikes. They are never wrong. Where strong, unaccountable sympathy or antipathy is experienced the instinct should be obeyed. Precisely in the same way spirit discerns the character of spirit. It cannot tell whether it is good or bad—these are

arbitrary terms—but it can recognise what is suitable and unsuitable. Why is it that one person unaccountably attracts and another repels? That one room, house, locality, is pleasant, another unpleasant, restful, or the reverse? It is because the indwelling spirit is, through its senses, affected, favourably or unfavourably, by the spiritual influences that impinge upon it. This faculty of discernment can be greatly cultivated, but a little cultivation will help every human being to form some estimate of the character of influences affecting him.

LIX

“ Another faculty must be developed in man, namely, the power to open and shut, as it were, the spiritual valves of his being. Man being aware, by the exercise of his spiritual senses, of the presence of hostile or dangerous spirits, or of the presence of spirits sympathetic to him, can, at will, close or open the avenues which, through his bodily and spiritual senses, give access to the influx of external spiritual force.

“ Man can also assist with his will or oppose with his will the will of the influencing

spirit. In order that he may be a free man—master of himself—man should cultivate his will; for whether consciously or unconsciously his life involves a struggle on the part of his will—his spirit—against the wills—the spirits—that seek to subjugate it. The same occurs in objective life. But this important difference exists, that in respect of the spiritual world assistance can be always and instantly procured.

“And here morals intrude themselves. Suppose the human spirit developing on lines of vice forced into a struggle for supremacy with an affinitive spirit. The result, of course, depends upon the relative strength of the incarnated and disembodied spirits. If the man has the stronger will, he prevails. He may be constantly victorious if his will be an unusually strong one, and, however vicious he may be, he remains a free man. But the probability, amounting almost to a certainty, is that he will meet evil spirits stronger than himself, and be beaten and reduced to slavery. He can summon no ally. It is useless to call in a big devil to help one against a small devil. But the case is very different with an incarnated spirit progressing, however slowly, on

even the most devious track, on lines of good. He can appeal. He can call in a force which is superior, for be sure good is always more powerful than evil. To inquire why would exhaust many days and nights of speculation ; but be certain of the fact that of two men or two spirits exercising similar psychological powers, the one with evil and the other with good intent, he that is striving for good will infallibly and invariably prevail.

“ The man with good intentions has strong allies to back him if he will but call them in. However slender and finely drawn out the thread of affinity with them may be, it will vibrate and it cannot vibrate in vain. Superior power is accessible to him. He can evoke. He can pray. He can ask for and obtain the joyful help of progressed and good spirits superior to any evil influence that may be troubling and tormenting him. Our first business, therefore, is to accustom ourselves to discriminate, to close ourselves against hostile influences, and to call in superior sympathetic influences to help us.

LX

“ All the higher spiritual faculties are capable of a development which, in comparison with their present rudimentary condition, may be said to be unlimited. Of the methods and *rationale* of inspiration, impression, clairaudience, clairvoyance, projection of the spirit beyond the body, we know little or nothing. Of persons open to inspiration—an essential quality of genius—some are aware that it proceeds from an external source, others attribute it to a force within themselves. Impression, if at all developed, carries conviction with it. The recipient speaks involuntarily, or perceives the pictured presentment of a state of mind, or of an occurrence, and is conscious of its external origin. In clairaudience the subject hears and in clairvoyance he sees, not with the physical organs, but as clearly as though through the bodily ears and eyes. Projection requires an active effort of will, and is either conscious or unconscious. In the latter case the spirit, impelled by its own or by some external will, follows the intense thought, and appears in the locality on which that thought is concen-

trated, but no consciousness of the event remains. In the former case, which is exceedingly rare, the spirit acting under similar impulse visits the desired locality, acts according to the impelling will, and remembers all the incidents of the event.

LXI

“That some are born with second sight, impressionable, inspirational, clairaudient, clairvoyant, while others appear incapable of developing those natural qualities beyond mere rudimentary indications, and that the possession of these gifts is independent of a very high spiritual organisation proves that they are due to conditions of the physical body, at any rate to a large extent. Of the laws governing those conditions we are supremely ignorant. All that can be certainly said is that for one set of phenomena a positive physical and mental state, and for the other set of phenomena a negative physical and mental state is required. For instance, to project the spirit beyond the body or to give an impression requires the operator to be positive and active. To receive impression,

to be clairaudient or clairvoyant, demands a negative and passive attitude. To develop these faculties man must therefore exercise the power of abstraction and concentration. He must cultivate the will and the power of controlling the will, calling it into activity and motion or reducing it to passivity and equilibrium according as the occasion demands.

“No doubt these matters will be clearly understood and reduced to method when scientific intelligence has been brought to bear upon psychology—as it will be more and more—and human beings will be developed by spiritual calisthenics, national psychical associations will exist, and moral diseases of the spirit will be submitted to psychological treatment. Very few people know anything of psychology, yet it is curious how psychical phraseology enters into everyday life, though the significance of the words are totally ignored. ‘I said to myself so-and-so’; ‘What possessed her to do such-and-such a thing?’; ‘He must have been beside himself,’ or ‘He is not at all himself’; ‘I am haunted by an idea,’ are expressions of common occurrence every day. But how little

grasp has the world in general of the truth that men do 'speak to themselves,' are 'possessed,' 'beside themselves,' or 'not themselves,' in the sense that they are occupied, possessed by someone else ; and that they are worried and tormented by spiritualities inimical or uncongenial to their own. When these things are realised, when all human action is not attributed to molecular changes and other purely physical causes, human action will be better understood, and we shall be far more capable than we now are of self and mutual help and control.

LXII

" Let me sum up under this heading.

" I hesitate to recommend the investigation of what is called 'spiritualism,' for it is attended with danger to most of us. The danger is largely physical and cannot be always avoided by moral force. If you do investigate, do not underrate the danger ; guard yourself on all points.

" I do recommend, but with caution also, the investigation of the higher spiritual faculties, the development of your own

spiritual powers, for with progress on those lines strength is acquired. There is danger to be apprehended also ; but in this case it is almost entirely moral danger, and therefore within your own control.*

“ Of course, excess is bad in this as in everything else. To develop spirituality at the expense of intellect and body is bad for the individual, and would be fatal to the race if universally persisted in. But of that there is not much danger. Nature is very wise, and takes pretty good care of herself.

“ Three curious facts are noteworthy as showing the marvellous self-preserving instinct of nature, namely, (1) the spread of spiritualism in religion, whether within or outside of the Churches ; (2) the revolt of culture and intelligence against materialism

* That this point was somewhat unduly laboured is a charge that might have been justified at the time these pages were written but not now. The awful slaughter in a great war must have a marked and salutary effect. It leads to a wiser and broader conception of the true nature and status of man in the scheme of creation, and softens, if it does not obliterate, the line we have drawn between what we call this life and the next. It tends to a readjustment of ideas that amounts almost to contempt for death. All that is good : but on the other hand it may be that in the craving for consolation we may run wild in the region of spiritualism.

indicated by the almost universal prevalence of psychological incident in modern novels, the craze about hypnotism and mesmerism, and the ever increasing flood of psychological, theosophical, and occult literature ; and (3) the strong reaction towards athleticism and the exhibition of physical dexterity and strength.

“ Man appears to have discovered that he has been forcing his intellectual at the expense of his animal nature, and that he must cultivate the latter to save the race. Man is perfectly right. This most healthy reaction is noticeable among the males. Football clubs, athletic associations, have of late years sprung up all over the country. They should be encouraged. It is still more apparent among the females. Among the ‘upper classes,’ who eventually set the national taste, the physical training of girls is far superior to that of any former generation. They ride, walk, play golf or lawn tennis, row, and develop the flesh in the most exemplary way. Women have almost outdone the males, and in London society certainly, making allowance for sex, the average young female is physically superior to the average young

male. The balance will be restored, no doubt, in a generation or two.

LXIII

“ And man has come to the conclusion also that in concentrating his attention entirely upon intellect, another and more interesting nature in him has been wellnigh stifled. Intellectuality, he finds, is not everything, and will not account for everything, or satisfy everything. Dimly perceptive of something different and higher within him which might throw a light on many perplexing problems that material science does not solve, faintly conscious of impulses, powers, senses, which transcend the body, he is turning hither and thither, poking and prying into all the odd holes and corners of literature all over the earth to try and discover some clue to the mystery, something that will demonstrate the existence of spirit, something that will put him in the way of discovering the true laws of his being, the true meaning of natural phenomena, and the objects, uses, and potentialities of the embryonic senses he feels within him. It is well that man is becoming aware

of his spiritual nature ; well, too, for him that he sees the sin of neglecting his animal nature. The prospects of the race are good.

LXIV

“ Man must be considered as the composite creature he is. Man is wrong in acting contrary to the dictates of his animal nature. He must suffer in so doing. But he should be master of them and submit them to his higher faculties.

“ Man should never act contrary to reason. He should obey spiritual impulse coincident with or beyond his reason, but never if it is contrary to reason.

“ Conscience, too, must be submitted to reason and reason to conscience. Man, being moral, must listen to conscience. Man, being a spirit, must listen to his spirit ; but man, being a human animal, must listen while on this physical plane to the human animal attribute, reason. On this plane reason is in some respects supreme. The nature and character of the spirituality of man must, therefore, be judged by man’s conscience and reason. He can then cultivate it in whichever

direction he selects, towards good or towards evil. Morals have nothing to do with spiritual development except in so far as, in the spiritual world, virtue is dynamically superior to vice. In that world virtue is strength, and the end of evil is to succumb to good. But morals have much to do with happiness in the world of consequence. All this is platitudinous, having its exact and acknowledged counterpart in objective earth-life. We can choose our friends and surroundings to a considerable extent. We can act in consonance or dissonance with our reason and conscience. We can lead virtuous lives, in the true though not generally accepted sense, or vicious lives, in the true though not generally accepted sense, and enjoy or suffer accordingly. The difference in the two spheres and lives consists in this : to a large extent our subjective environment is automatically created, and the subjective life is the consequence of our thoughts and deeds. Here in this world consequence is only partially realised, there in the next world it is realised to the full."

LXV

" I have followed you as best I can," Harry broke in, " and, I think, with some success ; but you must forgive my saying that you seem rather confused yourself, especially as to the location of the various faculties of man. Your language is not precise nor is your meaning quite clear."

" Your remark is perfectly justifiable and needs no apology. My language is confused and my expressions are ambiguous. It cannot be otherwise, for my knowledge is very limited, as is indeed all human knowledge, in the sphere of our conversation. We see, and see dimly, blurred images of what is not easily expressed in words. Some there are who claim an intimate acquaintance with all the intricacies of that most marvellously composite creature, that wonderful blending of immortal spirit, reasonable mind, and animal body—man. Their explanations may be correct, but they are not characterised by lucidity. We shall know much more, of course in time, as we progress ; but it will require the painful schooling of long, long ages of development before the things of the spirit

are coherently apprehended by the flesh. Man will not really understand his nature, will not know himself, until the superior part, the spiritual, has asserted its true position in respect to the inferior part, the animal ; and the race is very far from that. Neither I nor any man can analyse man, and separate and appoint each effect in turn to its proper source. Only it is safe to say, roughly and broadly speaking, of course, that certain sentiments and functions appertain to spirit, and others to the animal body. Will, conscience, intuition, clairvoyance, impression, hope, faith, love, for instance, may be said with sufficient truth to be of the spiritual ; instinct, passion, and all the merely animal and intellectual desires—I need not enumerate them—are of the physical. Every man has a spiritual character and an animal character, but usually they are mutually suitable to each other. There are exceptions, and accidents will happen, but, as a rule, the spirit inhabits a body agreeable to its character ; the body incarnates a spirit in accord with it. And remember, both grow together and develop each other. The spirit influences its animal body.

“How often we see a strong spirit struggling with the disordered machinery of an animal body all out of gear! The animal body influences the spirit to an enormous extent. As I have over and over again said, the body is the womb of the spirit. In earth-life it is prepared to be born at death, and earth-life affects it just as the child yet unborn is affected by the health, nourishment, surroundings of its mother. And remember also that during earth-life the spirit can think, see, feel, act only through the mediumship of the body, by means of bodily senses and forces, by means, it is true, of some senses and forces scarcely recognised and but little understood. And consider how little suffices to throw the intricate machinery of body out of gear. A few crystals of acid in the blood! A taint of poison that no analysis will discover! What horrible confusion they can create!

“Take insanity, for instance. Be sure of this, the spirit itself is always sane. Insanity is merely and solely bodily disease, but how completely the spirit is paralysed by it. That, thank God, is rare; but take the common case of natural decay in old age. The

spirit is there strong as ever, but unable to manifest, expressionless through want of adequate means of expression, but waiting to gain, by natural process of decay and dissolution, powers of expression such as it never possessed before.

“ This dependence of the spiritual upon the animal is a serious thought, my friends, for who has done quite justly by himself ? The body is ‘ the temple of the Lord.’ Yes, in deed and in truth it is, for it is the casket of the soul. Do you believe in the Bible as literally inspired ? No. Well, as inspired at all in the usual religious sense ? No. Well, read in the light of spiritualism, and the infinite wisdom of it will at least strike you with reverence and awe. But come ; I am no priest or parson, or theologian of any kind. I did not mean to preach you an embryonic sermon. It is your own fault. You will try and lead me off into the devious paths of theology and ethics. I am no moralist or theologian, yet five subjects, to two of which I have already alluded, must be mentioned. I would escape the task if I could ; but to refuse to deal with topics in regard to which my mental attitude is somewhat agnostic

would be cowardly in the extreme. I wish to deal with them with all reverence, and I will do so briefly, because whereas hitherto I have dealt with facts, the direct results of actual observation, or with conclusions logically deduced from observed facts, the profound subjects I now enter upon are to me matters for speculation chiefly. I refer to the theory of (1) reincarnations, (2) religion, (3) morals, (4) guardian angels, (5) conscience.

LXVI

“(1) The theory of reincarnation so far as I understand it and briefly stated is this :—

“Spiritual progress is possible only during animal life. Until a certain and very exalted point is reached, spirit is incapable of developing save when incarnated. Spirit goes through various forms of the organic creation until it reaches man, and, having arrived at individual consciousness in man, it continues to be embodied in successive forms of man until it attains such maturity as enables it to dispense with a physical body and to pass entirely beyond the terrestrial sphere. The periods, generally very lengthy, between in-

incarnations are passed by the spirit in a passive negative condition. It exists in a world composed of the creation of its last incarnate life, and is happy or unhappy according to the nature of the surroundings it has created for itself. But it lies passive, makes no effort, neither advances nor retrogrades, gains no experience ; but in its next incarnation starts from the position to which, in its last incarnation, it had attained. The character of each incarnation is determined by the use made by the spirit of its immediately preceding terrestrial experience.

“ If it has progressed in one earth-life it occupies a superior earth-form in the next incarnation. If it has retrograded, it is assigned a lower form. It seeks and finds by the natural law of affinity, an embodiment suitable to the condition in which it left its last earthly tenement.

LXVII

“ In essentials this theory is sound. It recognises to the full the basic condition of creation—man’s free will and responsibility ; and it is not irreconcilable with any natural

or revealed religion. It commends itself, also, by affording a logical solution to the perplexing problems involved in the apparent injustice of inherited bodily, mental, or moral disabilities, unfavourable circumstances, lack of opportunity, idiotcy, and so forth. At a certain point of development, memory, it is claimed, asserts itself, and the embodied spirit remembers all the incidents of all its past incarnations.

“ Professors of these doctrines affirm that they know other people who say that they have reached this condition ; and many people assert that the curious impression of familiarity with localities, events, or words which have in life never been seen, experienced, or heard before is due to a flash of memory from a former life. The strange yearning and quickening of faculty caused by scenic or artistic effects, and especially by music, is by some attributed to the same cause. But of all this there is no proof ; the evidence is second-hand. Slightly inaccurate action on the part of the two brain hemispheres, and the natural longings and aspirations of the spirit will account for the phenomena mentioned.

“Spiritualism is, as far as I am aware, generally opposed to this theory—the tenor of spiritual communications being that spiritual life is one of great activity and progress. Facts are against it, and in my opinion it is also contrary to the analogy of nature. The human animal is conceived in its mother’s womb, and is there, in that state of existence, prepared for earth-life once and for all. According to analogy the spirit should also be enwombed in the human animal body, and in that stage of existence prepared for spiritual life once and for all. Nature is prolific of types, and I see nothing in nature typical of the theory of reincarnation. And what necessity is there for it? Surely the spiritual world affords ample scope and opportunity for that complete readjustment of extrinsic inequalities which must of course take place somewhere.

LXVIII

“The object of and necessity for reincarnation is difficult to perceive. Nature ever adopts the simplest methods of attaining her ends, and loves to work in slow synthetic

methods of progression. But the reincarnation theory is very complicated, and involves progression by a series of convulsive starts—short periods of great activity, followed by enormous intervals of complete repose. The weak point is that though memory does, as it is claimed, assert itself when the culminating point is reached, it does not do so until then. The experiences of a former incarnation are not available to assist us in the present life.

“On the whole I incline strongly, though with an open mind, to the belief that man undergoes one earth-life only.

“It is often urged that spirits must know the truth of this and many other spiritual doctrines, and that, if spiritualism be true, and spirits do really communicate with us on this earth, they would communicate the truth; and many excellent people are surprised, and some horrified and frightened, because departed spirits adhere to the religious opinions they held on earth. Of course they do. The Jew is a Jew, the Buddhist is a Buddhist, the Mussulman a Mussulman, the Christian a Christian, the Agnostic an Agnostic, there as here. How

can it be otherwise ? Can man look at absolute truth and live ? One glimpse at such intolerable light would burst his brain like a bubble. Nature never works in such prodigious leaps. Man ever learns by degrees, whether in this world or in the next. It shocks some people to find Evangelicals remain evangelical, and Roman Catholics continue to be devoutly Roman Catholic. How illogical they are ! What a stupendous miracle it would be if release from the body enabled us instantly to break from all the convictions of a lifetime ; and there is nothing miraculous about death. It is in itself and in its consequences the most natural of all things. But of this we may be perfectly sure, that the truth prevails—in time ; and that if, however firmly rooted our religious convictions may be, we are animated by a sincere desire for truth, we shall not find it too hard to discard our errors and gradually acquire such progressive knowledge as we are progressively able to sustain.

“ There is nothing in spiritualism to shock the sensitiveness of the most devout adherent of any religion. All that spiritualism asserts is that, in matters religious as in all other

matters, death does not invest us with a miraculous faculty of discrimination ; produces no immediate change in our beliefs, hopes, sentiment, habits, desires, or even occupations ; nor does death greatly affect us except in matters which, appertaining solely to the animal body, perish with it. But spiritualism does deny that physical dissolution acts as a solvent so powerful as to evaporate in a moment all doubt, ignorance, prejudice, and sincere but false belief.

“ I can understand a Catholic, for instance, believing that truth has been revealed and confided only to the Catholic Church ; that is, at least, a logical deduction from certain premises ; but I cannot understand his deduction that all spirits must become aware of the fact immediately after death. For in that proposition neither reason nor logic can be found. Why should the disembodied spirit become immediately divested of error ? Why, because a spirit is relieved of its earthly body, should it be supposed to attain at a bound to knowledge and certainties of truth ? Such a proposition is most illogical, contrary to all we know of nature’s methods, and false. True, the spirit enters on vast possibilities of

enlightenment on all subjects, including religion, morals, and philosophy. It is free to pursue research untrammelled by the heavy clog of bodily existence. But no royal road to excellence exists there any more than here. Enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge, appreciation of truth is there, as here, the reward of aspiration, thought, study, work, and experiment. So we find every form of religion and philosophy held, attacked, maintained, or changed on that side as on this."

LXIX

"But surely," interrupted Harry, "in such a question as this of reincarnation they must know the truth."

"Must they?" said Tom. "Why? If you mean that all such facts are known to some spiritual beings, of course you are right; but what I think you mean is that spirits allied to earth, spirits just born, as it were, must know whether they are or are not destined to undergo reincarnation, and that appears to me a most irrational supposition. Only one thing must they know for certain—that they are not dead but alive, and it may

take some time to realise that patent fact. The difficulty that may be experienced by a hardened materialist in recognising immortality, his struggles to convince himself that his new surroundings are not the result of nightmare, hallucination, delirium, madness, strikes me as something very horrible to contemplate. Spirits tied or clinging to earth through lust, sin, interest, duty, affection, love, cannot, so long as they are so occupied, gain much insight into spiritual futurity. Spirits must inquire, they must study, they must learn. It is illogical to the last degree to suppose that to the average man and woman enlightenment comes as a flash on bodily death. High spiritual creatures gaze on truths imperceptible or perceived but as dim and blurred reflections by us, and see deep into mysteries to us unfathomable. And a ray of God's truth is by them sometimes flashed upon the individual man, and upon the world ; but man must work out his own salvation by painfully slow degrees. The fact is, the value of the change occurring at death is greatly overestimated. Birth is infinitely more important than death, for it marks the beginning of a conscious, individual, spirit

entity. Death is but an episode—though an important one—in the spirit's career, marking its entrance into life conditions appropriate to it. If this fact be recognised, and due allowance be made for the imperfection of the machinery whereby a message from the spirit world is communicated ; and if the multiplicity of imperfect instruments through which a message from the higher spirits must be sent to the recipient on earth be taken into account ; and if we further realise the impossibility of giving coherent expression in terms of this world to things appertaining to another world inconceivably different in qualities of time, space, motion, we shall cease to wonder why spiritualism is, in some respects, unsatisfactory in its results.

LXX

“(2) Of true religion, the aspiration of man to his God, I have nothing to say. That sacred mystery of spirit is known but to the man and his Creator. The mystery is too sacred, the sacredness too mysterious, to be submitted to expression in words, even were that possible ; but it is not. Religion could

be best expressed in music had one but the perfect gift. Nor is it necessary to speak of natural religion—that dear sense of companionship with Nature, of oneness with all the beauty and glory of life in all its aspects, and of identity with unliving matter in all its grandeur of form, colour, and stupendous force. But I may say a word or two on forms of religion—of religion intellectually conceived and its reaction upon spirit ; of religion spiritually conceived and its reaction on the intellectuality of man.

“ Christianity, even in its most unnatural sense—from the materialistic standpoint—is not unnatural from the spiritualistic point of view.

“ With the higher, deeper mysteries of Christianity I am not competent to deal, nor am I now concerned with the relative truth of Trinitarian and Unitarian doctrines. I doubt if when properly understood there is much difference between them. To some the latter may contain a higher conception of the inconceivable ; it may be the result of a nobler effort to understand that ‘ God is a spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit ’ ; but it may be too high for the human

intellect and spirit to realise, too sublime a doctrine for practical use. And the former thesis is surely not revolting to any possible human conception of God. Anthropomorphism is the result of human effort to precipitate an abstract idea. It is impossible to picture God except in the likeness of man. God, in the image of man, is the only conceivable way in which God can be apprehended by the human senses of man in the image of God. The Trinitarian theory represents perfectly the scientific solidification of the abstract idea of God and creation into terms appreciable by human senses and intellect ; it includes the unthinkable, unmanifested Absolute, the creative manifested word, the outflowing sustaining spirit.

“ Please understand we are not discussing comparative theology. I am only endeavouring to explain that, as it seems to me, the Christian faith is not unnatural in view of what we see by the dim light of spiritualism may be possible, and is rationally reconcilable with, and even deducible from, the theory of a necessarily imperfect creation consisting of developing spirit and matter, with its inevitable consequence—free will.”

LXXI

“ Then you consider such an irrational belief to be essential to Christianity : That no man has any right to call himself a Christian who does not believe that Christ was God and born of a virgin ? ”

“ No, I don't say anything of the kind. In fact, I don't and won't say anything at all about it. I will not be tempted into a definition of Christianity, or allured into a statement of the particular form of words authorising a human being to call himself a Christian; neither will I, even to please you, my dear Harry, try to explain my own religious opinions and convictions. I am looking at the matter, as I have already mentioned, from a scientific point of view—if the scientists will pardon the expression—and all that I say is that if you or any one else believe in the Christian theory of the birth of Christ, spiritualism will bear you out as to its possibility. I suppose the Fall of Man, the Atonement, and the Divinity of the Atoner, would generally be accepted as the basic essentials of Christianity. It has sometimes occurred to me that a fall of man is quite compatible

with the theories I have endeavoured to express."

"What do you mean?" said Harry.

"Well, it is not very easy to say," continued Tom, "but I think what I mean is this: Spirit and matter—matter spiritualised—having progressed together to the point of self-consciousness and responsibility—in sufficiently-developed man, it is obvious that man became free to move in any direction. He could go up or down. He could go forward into greater spirituality or backward into more complete materiality. He may have selected the latter course. He may have arrived at a period in which he was, as it were, balanced on the place of departure of two curves, one leading towards pure spirit, the other towards pure earth, mere animalism. He took the descending curve—the line which would lead him back to his origin in matter. To drag him back again and save the race, an object lesson—the presentment of the ultimate absolute ideal, perfect spirit perfectly animalised, perfect animal perfectly spiritualised, perfect God and perfect man—was necessary. Nothing short of recognition of his original possibilities could avail to arrest

man's downward tendency and to set his slipping feet again upon the ascending curve ; and nothing less than the flashed vision of the divine in man, and belief in it, could suffice to open his blurred eyes to dim perception of those possibilities. We will not discuss whether there ever was a Fall and an Atonement, whether Christianity contains original truth or is a mixture of solar myths, Chaldean astronomy, Egyptian spiritualism, pagan superstitions, scholastic metaphysics and Roman Imperialism. I am only saying that, if the suppositions on which Christianity are based are true, the accounting theory of man's use of free will and creative thought in a wrong direction is, at any rate, neither illogical nor derogatory to a supreme creative power."

"But it limits your so-called Supreme Power," interrupted Dick, "or accuses him of malevolence."

"Yes, it limits him, of course," replied Tom. "God cannot transcend God's nature. Assume God—perfection. Assume anything else—it must be imperfect. That imperfection I call creation—all the appearances and phenomena, of matter and spirit, man among

them, and the highest known to us. Granting creation—the development of matter and spirit—and the essential and inevitable attribute of development, responsibility and free will, and again I say a Fall and an Atonement is neither unreasonable to the imperfect created, nor derogatory to the perfect Creator. At the same time I do not believe in a literal fall. I do believe in the rise of man. The ‘fall’ is, I think, allegorical of the truth. Man was created in the likeness of perfection—God. In reality there is no ‘*was.*’ Man *is* in the likeness of God in God’s eyes, for God is ‘I am’ without past or future. But in the dimensions of creation man has got to get there. Man is both *being* and *becoming*, and the ‘fall’ images that fact.

LXXII

“Nor, as it seems to me, ought the doctrine of the divinity of the Christ to be repulsive to any spiritual evolutionist, even though he does not adhere to it. At some point or other in progress the abstract idea of unity in perfection, of spirit and matter must become concrete, must externalise itself. The as-

piration must individualise. Spirit, matter, thought, creation are eternal. Time is nothing. It matters not whether it be now or eighteen hundred, or eighteen hundred million years past, or to come, the point must be somewhere. The whole—the sum of all—inconceivable to thought, must be imaged in external perfection—in the perfect unification of God and man. All that we can see of God is God in us ; but the vision has materialised, and to the possibility of that vision we—material—can aspire. Whatever may be thought of the dogmas of Christianity, the value of that, and the other great central truths underlying them, cannot be gainsaid. The ethics of Christianity are shared by many other religions ; in the field of morals it is not original. In what, then, consists its peculiarity ? In these two all-important facts : The reality of spirit life, and the reality of universal fellowship—love—as the informing principle of creation.

“ Though men of all religions have always believed in immortality, it has been an immortality of a very vague and shadowy kind, a spiritual existence, inferior to bodily existence. In Christianity alone is actual identity

in immortality strongly insisted upon. 'It is I myself; touch me, look upon me, handle me, it is I and no other, to all intents and purposes the same,' is the teaching and the demonstration of Christ. And the superiority of the spiritual over the animal body is strongly impressed upon us throughout.

LXXIII

"The necessity of love—fellowship—as the essential principle of progress is with equal force insisted upon. In other words, we are taught that the great struggle consists in assisting the ascension of individualised spirit, through matter, towards universal spirit, by asserting the superiority of the spiritual over the material, of the Kingdom of God over the kingdom of this world—as they called it. The foundation of Christianity is that God is spirit and that man is a spirit, and whatever may be thought of the details of the superstructure raised upon it, the solid truth of the foundation cannot be denied.

"The all-important fact of creation, to us, is individuality. Free will and responsibility are essential and inseparable qualities of pro-

gress. Therefore any system of religion that dwarfs the sense of individual responsibility is faulty. The fundamental error of Roman Catholicism, in connection with spiritual development, is its wasting effect on the sense of responsibility, free will, and individuality. It withers individual—that is spiritual—development by relieving man of responsibility. It allows of the exercise of will up to a certain point only—belief in and submission to the Church. After that will must be repressed, responsibility ceases, and there can be no growth. Otherwise Roman Catholicism is alive, being full of spiritualism.

“ So also are the evangelical bodies, whether within or without the pale of the Established Church. They are informed with the spirit—are alive. They recognise it as their foundation and active principle. Their fatal error consists of the monstrous idea of God they have formulated in their belief. They dishonour God in their conception of Him, stultify human intelligence and morals by seeking to bend them to that conception, dwarf spirit, will, and individuality by teaching that man is ‘ saved ’ by a spiritual influx of Christ entirely independent of any action

on the part of his own spiritual will. But they are full of spirituality and therefore alive. Though 'revivals,' 'conversions,' 'the finding of Christ,' are usually demonstrations of an hysterical bodily condition—very contagious, as all hysterical phenomena are—yet, without doubt the human spirit is sometimes violently quickened by a great volume of spirit force. A change, sudden and yet sometimes lasting, a transformation of life and of character, consequent on 'conversion,' does sometimes occur, and is too marked to be overlooked. Increased knowledge of spiritual therapeutics will throw much light on this and other most perplexing points.

LXXIV

“The sin of the Church of England in the past has been its unspirituality. The result is that it exists, but does not live, and has cast from it those in whom spirit, perhaps of a low order, but still spirit, manifests itself. The Church stands like an aged oak, firm rooted in the soil; but it has put forth but few green leaves. It is a pity. With all its great traditions, high antiquity, and counten-

ance by the State, the Church of England should have kept, controlled, and utilised all the spiritualism in the countless sects, from Irvingites and Quakers to the Salvation Army, inquiring, moulding, rejecting the false, cherishing the true, softening asperities, controlling hysteria, and guiding spiritual force. Alas, spiritualism has found a cold welcome in a Church which largely holds that the age of what it ignorantly calls miracles is past—if, indeed, it ever existed. So it comes about that in Protestantism, spiritualised Christianity—that is, Christianity alive—has been too often driven out of the Church and wanders blindly into many pits of absurdity.

“ Is the Church awake to this fact—is it or will it ever become sufficiently alive to know that it is nearly dead ? I hope so and I think so, for of late a great change has taken place. One thing is sure—no devitalised body can fight the flood of infidelity sweeping over the land. Masses of men cannot be argued out of materialism or into a belief in religious truths. It is not so much the intellect that wants convincing as the spirit that requires awakening. If Christianity is to live it will be through the

efforts of Salvation Armies, of sober Nonconformists, of spiritualists, 'the New Thought' and other wandering sinners, or by the Church of Rome; unless, of course, the Anglican Church starts from that attitude of materialistic incredulity, induced by a properly strong reaction against all the abuses of Rome, and wakes up, before it is too late, to the fact that spirit is the life, the only living, moving, combative, persuasive force in a Church, as in everything else.*

LXXV

"(3) As long as man fails to grasp the true significance of the words 'faith' and 'good works,' the controversy between the adherents of St. Peter and St. Paul will continue. Faith is confounded with belief in some particular dogma or article of some creed. It is nothing of the kind.

"Faith is recognition of fact and confidence; belief in the facts of existence and creation; confidence in man's power to overcome, inspired by confidence in the will and

* Since these words were written a great advance in the right direction is evident in the Established Church.

ability of an all-good God to enable him to do so. Good works are looked upon as giving so much money to the poor, attention to religious observances, and so on. A very small-minded conception. Good works are the precipitation of faith, practical acknowledgment of the fact of creation, namely, the evolution of the spirit towards its source and of man's duty to act in harmony with that fact. The most vicious life is that which is most in discord, the most virtuous life that which is most in accord with the scheme of creation.

“ Predestination is a doctrine grotesque in its atrocity. Foreknowledge on the part of a Creator in no way conflicts with perfect liberty of the created. Surely the difference between knowing and ordaining is not difficult to perceive.

“ Good and evil are but harmony and discord ; original sin the unattuned condition of matter that has to be attuned by man, for the strings that vibrate to the breath of creation are imperishable, self-conscious, human spirits.

“ Virtue, therefore, is harmony with creation, and depends largely upon knowledge.

“Morality is an arbitrary term. What is right for one man, or race, or age, may be wrong for another man, or race, or age. To live up to the highest recognised standard, to do nothing consciously to cause degradation or loss of self-respect, to obey conscience, is to be perfectly moral—provided, of course, that the ideal we set before us is the highest conceivable under the highest degree of knowledge to which we are capable of attaining. Man is not responsible for doing that which he does not know to be wrong; but, if his ignorance is due to his own neglect, he is responsible.

“Through ignorance of our ignorance we are often harshly judged by others. But, on the other hand, man delights in wrapping himself in soft folds of self-delusion. They will be ruthlessly stripped from us some day, and we shall know ourselves to be responsible in many cases in which we fondly hoped to set up ignorance as a plea. It is rather terrible to reflect that our acts and thoughts are seen and understood by spiritual beings like ourselves; that thoughts and deeds remain, and that some day they will constitute our world and we shall know ourselves as we are. Re-

member that, as the body of man is exposed to danger and disease, to be averted only by knowledge and instinct, so the spirit of man is exposed to danger, to be averted only by knowledge and intuition, which is superior to knowledge. Cultivate knowledge. Though ignorance may be momentary bliss, it is culpable not to be wise.

LXXVI

“(4) Each one of us is attended through this life, and far beyond, by a high spiritual presence—a Guardian Angel. He is very powerful, but bear in mind he can do but little for us without our help. He, like us, is bound by natural law. Low, animalised, evil thoughts are a barrier to him. They thicken earth’s moral atmosphere till, in its opacity, we become impervious to him. Good thoughts render the moral atmosphere transparent. Every lofty aspiration pierces the solid moral atmosphere and enables our guardian to transmit intelligence to us, just as a wire, by drilling a hole through the solid material atmosphere, allows a telegraphic message to be flashed along.

“ The moral force of aspiration cannot be overestimated. Prayer—earnest, passionate, fervid wish of the spirit directed to the source and origin of all spirit—is the highest form of aspiration, and to its potency no bounds can be set. However reverently undertaken, an analysis of prayer would be almost blasphemous, I think. Whether prayer be heard by a supreme Being, or whether the waves of thought set in motion by intensity of wish spreading in ever-widening circles, and impinging upon spiritualities attuned to them, become articulate in the impact, and, from the impact, rebound upon us, I will not discuss. We know that vibrations of ether set in motion by an electric discharge, though spreading in circles of waves in all directions, are caught coherently, and are translated only by instruments attuned to that particular rapidity of vibration and to no other ; to any other series of vibrating waves the instrument is deaf and dumb. The analogy may hold good. The waves of prayer generated by the spirit in man may break voicelessly upon some spiritual shores, and may become audible only to the spiritualities harmoniously at-

tuned to the quality of the vibration of the wave set in motion. But I know not. I only know that the reaction of prayer is immediate and of like quality to the wish, and that in earnest aspiration, passionate wish, fervid prayer, lies the strongest spiritual power of which man is possessed."

LXXVII

Harry : " Your theories are interesting, to say the least. How do you come to have so much studied these things ? "

" Studied these things ? I—oh, dear no ! I am not instructed in the least. It makes me shy to speak on such subjects, for well I know my own incompetency, well I know how much at variance to these views of life my life has been, and is, and will be. But a drunkard might preach on the vice of drunkenness fairly well ; and a material, worldly man may hold ideas of spirituality and unworldliness. To be personal is the essence of boredom, and I am not going to inflict an apology for my life on you. Only, for Heaven's sake, don't quote at me the stupid aphorism that men should practise what they preach. I don't

pretend to. To be candid, I have naturally but little leaning towards mysticism, and am quite overbalanced by materialistic tendencies. I was not born into a contemplative life, and unless the force of eccentricity is very great, we all run jolting more or less in the curve created by the circumstances of our birth and lives. You know of what my existence consists ; the winning of my bread, or, to be truthful, of my bread and butter with now and then a little sugar to it. What room is there for self-communion and searching of the soul in such a life ? Besides, as I have told you, I am happier in activity, in action, than in thought. The faculty of clear thinking and luminous research is the rare gift of a very few. Profound introspection, the microscopic examination of self is unnatural and unhealthy to most men. The average man is, to my thinking, better employed in looking out than in looking in, in observation of matters external to him than in analysis of self ; and in that average my lot is cast. I know what I am fit for, and in that direction I try and act.

LXXVIII

“ And consider what psychological research involves. Almost total seclusion from the world. It is incompatible with the life we ordinary folks lead. What is the sum and substance of ‘society’ as we three understand it? Ambition, notoriety, pleasure. The struggle for power and place dragging jealousy, disappointment, ungratified vanity in its train. Public life : an image fair-seeming without, like a white-walled Eastern town, and, like it, with a good deal of corruption and rottenness within : a long-continued struggle to be amused and to amuse. What do we all do? Get up and go to bed, dress and undress, eat and drink—more than we need—spend our money on amusements that don’t amuse us, talk when we would be silent, smile when we would like to cry, pose to be what we are not and hide what we really are, grind ourselves to the universal pattern, tear ourselves in tatters—fashionable tatters, of course—of passion, jostle each other out of place, eat, drink, hunt, fish, shoot, go to parties and give parties, dance, flirt, do wrong and rejoice, do right and re-

pent, bore ourselves till death were welcome but that we fear to die, patiently drudge through the dull day till the tale of work be done, snatching at happiness now and then ; why not ? Who would grudge an ear or two to the stolid ox treading out the corn ? And so we tire of society and seek for rest, and so we tire of rest and seek society, till evening comes and one by one drop out of the dream of this life into the wakefulness of life to come.

“ The life of the world, be it ever so blameless, is very difficult to reconcile with the spiritual life ; it is hard to combine the two, though in appearance you may do so. I am not girding at the ‘ world.’ There is nothing much the matter with it. Its ideals are not lofty, its aims fall very short of the sublime. It is busy and it is pleasant, and its pleasure and business require struggle for existence, for the competition is intense, and in the struggle the fittest survive and the unfit succumb. That is good for the race, for though the measure of fitness is not ideally high, it serves the purpose, it works out for good. But the ‘ world ’ hardens the material casing and withers the spiritual core ; and yet to all of

us, who have spiritual nerves to feel, there come moments when our worldly wrappings fall from us like an insect's husk, and for a moment we flutter up into the light of a clearer day. Be you saturated with society to the core, triply bound in brazen knowledge of the world, case-hardened by success, or scarred with care, you will feel the spirit quicken now and then. It may be walking home from a ball, when the clean white dawning creeps over the sleeping town ; it may be under the sweet influence of the Pleiades on some night so rare as this, or in the living silence of an English June, or in the dead whisperings of the solemn North, or amid the echoes of cathedral aisles, or while gazing at the pictured embers on your hearth, that the moment comes. But come it will. The spirit beats at times against its bars. It longs, and, in its longings, compels to thought. So, at times, I too have pondered a little amid all the business and the pleasure, the worries and delights, the misery and happiness of life, and have thought more than some others perhaps because a firm foundation of facts on which to build my speculations had fortunately been provided for me."

LXXIX

“ You are too hard upon the world,” said Dick. “ There are heaps of thinking men and women in it, and thinking cultured sets.”

“ Yes, there are a few ; but the lower classes are too much occupied with bread and butter, the middle classes with broadcloth and creaky boots, the upper classes with truffles and champagne. Science though no longer blind is still short-sighted. Medicine and theology too busy in the race for notoriety and gold. Art only sees, sees a glimmer, through dim spectacles, of what the dead see, and art also is choked almost to death by Mammon. You need not look for spirit cultivation in any class or set. Only in the Catholic Church is it really cultivated, as far as I know, and among a few individuals whom you and I are not very likely to meet. Sects and societies there are of course, any number of them, some wise and commendable, but most of them undisciplined, curious blendings of animal and spiritual powers, strange mixtures of religion, psychology, and metaphysics. The last few years have witnessed an upheaval against materialism, and great

good will result, for amid all the emotional nonsense, confusion and extravagance that go to make it up, golden grains of truth lie hid and will come to light.*

LXXX

“ But come, enough of this ; let me struggle back to more solid ground. You have seduced me into devious paths of eclecticism, and have drawn my wandering feet into vague alluring regions of mystic and transcendental thought. I have tried to speak on matters about which I know nothing and about which little or nothing is known. Matters, did I say ? How poor is language ! How inadequate to express ! How vain and yet how fascinating is the pursuit of truth ! About these mysteries have not men thought and pondered, and gone mad and become sane, agreed and differed, loved, hated, tortured, and destroyed each other ? And are they any nearer an agreement ? I do not know, but I think so

* It has received a tremendous impetus from the effects, in this world and in the next, of the gigantic struggle materialised on this plane as a terrible and devastating war.

and I hope so. It is true there are more Christians, and consequently more Christian sects. But, nevertheless, through all the conflict of creeds and confusion of dogmas I seem to see gradually emerging agreement on cardinal and spiritual points.

LXXXI

“(5) ‘What is truth?’ The most serious question that was ever wrongfully attributed to jest. And what can I say? I, to whom philosophy is little better than a name, and theology a thing almost unknown; I, who have only thought a little sometimes, alone, under the sky? Truth is beyond us. We can but worship the ideal from afar; and yet do we not all take faint reflections, sometimes, in our spirit, of the pure light of everlasting truths? Surely sometimes a ray from the essential truth, the great truth underlying all religions, philosophies, systems, and forms—breaks in upon the darkness, the semi-gloom of creeds. Let us fix our eyes on that quivering and troubled ray, and, humble in the knowledge of our ignorance, do the best we can and take comfort and be content. I do

not think that with all this mental worry a good God can be pleased.

“ Were we meant to believe that everlasting welfare depends upon the turning of a word, the interpretation of a text, the reception of a dogma or of a theological creed ? Were we made to fret ourselves in vain against the iron silence of the unknown ? ‘ What doth the law require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ’ That is a tolerably simple rule of conduct. Why not be content to follow it ? Does the good God desire, I wonder, that we should give so much more ? Centuries upon centuries of intellectual thought, of endless disputation, persecution, hatred, tears in oceans, and a world of woe, are the offerings proffered to a God of Love. To do justly in bitter hatred towards sincere belief ! To love mercy in dealing out damnation to all who differ ! To walk humbly in the hideous arrogance of the elect ! Is that the true interpretation of the text ? Did a good God mean that His creatures should thus rack themselves to find out—what ? At best, to know at last how little they can know ! Though you may have doubts, my dear Harry, of

the Bible as divinely inspired, you will admit the wisdom and comfort to be found in it. You want a rule of life. What is required of you but 'to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' You are terrified at the uncertainty of the future. 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' You are perplexed and worried by the jarring of religions and of creeds. 'Be still, and know that I am God.' I commend those sayings to you.

LXXXII

" 'God is love.' 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' 'Love casteth out fear.' But it is hard to realise sometimes. Hard to see the light through the black rolling clouds of man's making. Hard to feel the presence of a better way, to hear the harmony of omnipresent good, through all the din of rampant evil, the loud vulgarities of this jostling world, and the brutal selfishness of Christian men. But the light and the melody are there. Through all the discord of a world at war, through all the cruel jars of creeds and loud anathemas of

rival sects, may yet be heard, by those who list, the Still Small Voice of God.

“It is hard to stop. God ! how lovely is the night ! It draws out thought as the sun draws out the dew, as those bright stars draw out the soul. Oh, for one moment to flash up there, to pierce a little into that profundity of space ! Is it not all part of me, and I of it ? How soft the wind blows from the western sea ! How sweetly, sadly it sighs among the trees, among those little stunted pines that stand so black and silent waiting for the sun ! How solemnly the ocean speaks ! How the low cadence of its chords wakes responsive echoes in the soul ! Wakes what ? I cannot tell. I cannot understand. Blind and deaf and dumb and with no understanding am I made. With what serenity the paling moon stoops to the western verge among the fading stars ! How still, and how content is the night, waiting for the promise in the whitening East ! How sad ! Aye, but not the sadness of despair. Sad in the thinking of unutterable thoughts, sad in the waiting, though but for a little time. And I cannot understand. Flesh of her flesh, bone of my bone, am I not of Nature and is not Nature of me ?

And yet I cannot understand, and she has so much to say. Only the spirit in me knows a little, and that it cannot speak. And will it be always so? Oh, no! God is good. The harmony of creation will some day break articulately on the soul. In the meantime we may know our littleness and try and walk humbly before our God. But we must walk, we must not crawl. We must stand erect and face the sky; we must not stoop. We are, of God's creation, man. We must know our greatness also, and rejoice in life, for life is very, very good. And now, before the dawn broadens into day, let me, leaving the field of speculation and innate consciousness, and ceasing to try and tell you all I think about what I think I think, let me go once more over surer ground and recapitulate what I think about what I think I know.

LXXXIII

“(1) All creation, then, is the evolution of spirit in and through matter back towards its source—God.

“(2) In that process spirit and matter are subject to immutable natural laws.

“(3) Inorganic matter, under the action of those laws, differentiates, separates, combines, rises from simple to complex forms, grows by accretion from without, decays, moves automatically and exhibits some of the attributes of life.

“(4) From the inorganic, creation rises to matter having life. Organic matter in the vegetable kingdom, following the methods of inorganic matter, combines, separates, differentiates, but it grows from within, reproduces, dies, loses the principle of life. Plants, their feet—as it were—being rooted, cannot move from one locality to another ; but they can and do move their bodies in search of favourable conditions. Some plants not only draw nourishment from earth and air at first-hand, but take it second-hand also, capturing, devouring, and digesting animal substances. Plants show great activity in self-preservation, and fight among each other sturdily in the struggle for life. In some of them the reproductive process is more highly developed than in some members of the animal kingdom. How far they have sense or sensibility, who can say ? It is certain that the higher forms of vegetable life are fully as

developed as the lower forms of animal life. Life is identical, and it exhibits identical functions and phenomena.

“In all this orderly progression, spirit progresses along with matter, seeking and finding through the natural laws of affinity, attraction and repulsion, the form which is fit to receive it, and which it is fit to inhabit. So the vegetable kingdom rising from simpler to more complex forms passes insensibly into the animal kingdom.

“(5) In the animal kingdom the same sequence, the same phenomena occurring in obedience to the same laws, are found. Progression is from simpler and lower to more complex and higher forms, until the climax—man—is reached, and a new principle comes into active operation. During evolution, development, which has been unconscious, unintelligent, automatic under compulsion of natural law, becomes conscious, intelligent, the result of free will exercised within the constitutional limits of natural laws. The spirit struggles into consciousness, into individuality, and for all future development the individual, the ‘Ego,’ is responsible.

“(6) At physical death the individualised spirit passes out of matter—in the sense in which that term is ordinarily understood—and is born into a world which to a large extent it has created during incarnation in the animal man. What was the unreal to it then becomes real. The spirit does not at physical death pass into a new place, but into new conditions of apprehension. Its world contains the consequences of all that it has done. Every thought, good, bad and indifferent, every action, good, indifferent, and bad, every wish of every kind is there.

“ This may sound hard, but it is true.

“ Every sin must be expiated.

“ Every mistake outworn.

“ Restitution must be made for every wrong done.

“ Nature is inexorable. Cause and effect cannot be gainsaid. Motive, intention, make no immediate difference. Cut a vein and it will bleed, whether severed by accident or design ; and so equally form a thought and transfer it into action, whether purposely or in ignorance, whether aware or unaware of the results, and the inevitable consequence identical in both cases, will ensue.

“(7) Earth-life, incarnation, is the necessary period of gestation of the spirit. It there prepares itself for the spiritual life into which it is born at physical death. During development in the body, spirit has to contend with the imperfections of its body, and the imperfections of its physical and spiritual surroundings. Its principal enemies are intellectual pride and the action of inimical surroundings. Intellectual pride is fatal because it will not admit the superiority of spirit. The spiritual surrounding is dangerous on account of the magnetic or mesmeric power exercised by disembodied spirits upon the spirit incarnate, and upon the incarnating body—an influence which, commencing by suggestion, may end in obsession—that is, in the complete subjection of one to another personality. It is comparatively easy for us, if we choose, to assert our liberty against a human influence injurious to us, but much more difficult to be independent of an intangible spirit, whose proximity we cannot, by physical means, avoid. And impossible to be independent if the existence and influence of the spirit be not believed in.

“(8) Development of man's spiritual nature

may be attempted on the lines of the phenomena of spiritualism ; but the process is dangerous, as it is apt to produce morbid bodily conditions, and it lays the spirit open to attack. Development should be internally conducted. First by a real, active recognition of the fact that we are each of us a spirit. In the second place by exercising the senses and powers of the spirit, and principally the will. Will is mainly spiritual. We cannot be controlled or influenced against our will by any spirit inferior to us in will power ; therefore the will should be cultivated and the means of operating with it."

LXXXIV

"What you call will is, I conceive, equivalent to the Christian Faith," interpolated Harry. "Am I right in thinking so?"

"Well," answered Tom, "will power is generated by confidence. Confidence is faith, and can do wonders. In ordinary physical life the shadow of this is plain. A man can swim when he is confident he can swim. Nothing is accomplished by a doubting heart. Self-reliance is the prelude of success. Every

effort should be made in full faith of success. If the result is failure, remember want of confidence and will power was the cause of failure, and renew the attempt in greater faith. Ultimate success is certain ; failures are but the stepping-stones to it.

“(9) All spiritual phenomena are reducible into two classes, active and passive, or, if you prefer it, positive and negative. To produce phenomena, therefore, the opposite qualities of activity and passivity of will must be cultivated. This is the object of all the formulæ of magic. Incantations and ceremonies are absolutely meaningless and useless except in so far as, by exaltation or depression, they produce an abnormally active or passive condition of the will.

“Remember that it is impossible so to divide man as to rightly apportion all his senses, faculties, powers, perceptions, to the various natures composing him. Man must be considered and developed as a whole. Cultivate the animal man and all pertaining to it, for man is an animal, and a healthy animal body is necessary to true intellectual and spiritual growth. Cultivate the intellect, for man is an intellectual animal, and through

the intellect the animal and spiritual is elevated, refined, and governed. Reason—an intellectual quality—is the ultimate judge of both animal and spiritual action. We may spiritually apprehend and believe what is not demonstrable to reason ; but we may not accept what is contrary to reason. Even if it be absolute truth, it is not truth as discernible to us.

“ Cultivate the spirit, for man is a spiritual animal. Spirit is superior to all : it originates and dominates, it survives, it is the *real* man. Cultivate the moral sense. Spiritual development may be made on lines of good or evil, and spiritual agencies may be exerted in pursuit of any object ; but phenomena are more easily produced for a good than for a bad object ; good is more powerful than evil, right is might in the subjective world.

LXXXV

“(10) The majority of mankind are naturally indisposed to spiritual influx. Their spirituality being incased in a solid mass of animal matter hardened by intellectual materiality of thought, is not easily reached

Some are naturally by physical peculiarities predisposed to spiritual influx ; and others become so by physical disease. All persons so predisposed are capable of receiving inspiration good or bad, high or low. The character of the inspiration depends upon themselves ; and the results depend also upon themselves. Inspiration acts upon the indwelling spirit, and the indwelling spirit can act only through the intellectual and animal mechanics of the physical body. The beautiful possibilities resulting from inspiration are self-evident. So also is the infinite evil that may be wrought. The damage to ourselves that may be caused by inspiration or any other form of influence of a low or malignant type depends upon our own nature. A low, debased, stolid, animal man cannot receive much hurt ; but highly organised aspiring nature, one who wishes to do well, may be almost irretrievably harmed. All men, especially all highly developed men, and most especially all sensitive, inspirational men, should be on their guard.

LXXXVI

“(11) Man is not reduced to rely upon his own unaided will. Other and superior forces of a moral and religious character may be called into action to assist him in maintaining his freedom and in developing the spirit within him. We can draw to us those friends who have gone before and whose help we desire. Good intention, an honest purpose, acts as a barrier against low or hostile intruding spiritual influences. Religion and morals come into play.

“(12) In religion truth is relative. That form of religion is truest and best which rings out the clearest tone to the stroke of each man's honest aspiration. Morals are comparative. Morality is the endeavour to conform to your highest standard, and remember that, in matters spiritual, morality is strength, morals take the place of brute force.

“(13) Prayer, the intense wish of an individualised spirit to universal consciousness, God is effectual. But we must exert our own will. There is no help for those who do not try and help themselves. The dynamic force

of prayer is infinitely great. How it acts I know not, but its effects I know. The reaction of prayer on the spirit is immediate and plain. Prayer is the best and the least used of all means of ensuring spiritual integrity, of shielding the spirit from attack, and encouraging its power. That, I take it, is about all I know, or think I know."

LXXXVII

"I did not wish to interrupt," said Dick, "but you have propounded a most atrocious theory. You say that every thought and act, every single thing we say or do, bears its fruit, its consequences, out to the bitter end, without the smallest reference to motive, ignorance, our own natures and temptations, or even to whether we are really free agents or not. I can imagine nothing more frightfully, wickedly unjust. You talk a great deal about free will; but surely you must admit that man is a creature of circumstances also."

"Yes, to a certain extent of course he is. Free will is all powerful, but only within constitutional limits; yet be sure those limits are very wide. Man is hampered by the con-

sequences of his own will in action. He makes fetters for himself. He is bound also by chains forged by the will of others in action. Most of the limitations to will—what we call fate or circumstances—that are not due to faults of commission or omission on our part, are due to acts or omissions to act on the part of others. The fact that we are hampered by the acts of other responsible beings does not invalidate the doctrine of responsibility. But I thought I had spoken of all this before. Be sure of this : Nature, though inexorable, is absolutely just ; and there is a power beyond justice. God is good. As a rule, I fancy, the balance is pretty fairly struck in this life. Most certainly it is adjusted with perfect equity in the next. Every motive, every wish, every intention, thought, desire, draws out its appropriate chain of consequence ; and the consequences of facts, acts, words, deeds, are balanced and redressed by them. This is self-evident. How can it be otherwise in a world of truth ? For what is truth but thought, feeling, intention, made evident ? The first consequence is the same, whatever the motive may be ; the totality of consequences is quite a different thing.

“ If you start two men along a road, and one, being blind, falls into a ditch, and the other, having wilfully shut his eyes, shares the same fate, the immediate consequence is precisely the same—they both get wet. But the ultimate sum of consequences is very different. The blind incurs no blame, unless, indeed, the blindness is the consequence of his own fault.

“ Are we morally handicapped by heredity? Are we to blame for slow progress under a heavy load? Assuredly not. Yet what is heredity but the consequence of free action of others? The clog of temperament knocks against our shins and lames us. Are we morally responsible? No; but what is temperament but heredity? In all such cases there is a transference of responsibility, accurately balanced to the very nicety of a hair, in the great summing up of our real individual responsibility. The honesty of effort made to overcome disabilities of temperament and inherited moral and physical weakness and disease is surely and fully taken into account. We labour under educational disadvantages, under disadvantages due to mistakes made perhaps with the best inten-

tion by those who, for a time, had the disposition of our lives. We have to contend against circumstances not always of our own making, not always under our control, against the consequences of honestly conceived but mistaken action on our part or on the part of others.

“Who can measure responsibility? No one. ‘Judge not.’ It will be defined with absolute accuracy in the Judgment; or, to speak correctly, it will with absolute accuracy define itself in that condition where consequence forms the world in which we live, and all the surroundings, capabilities, and phenomena of that world and life. The ancient Egyptian and Christian conception of a Judgment Day is but an anthropomorphic attempt to depict, as a concretion, that which is only dimly conceivable as an abstraction to the human intellect, namely, a real world of results in which merit and blame, the action and reaction of cause and effect, finds its own level as surely as does water on this terrestrial globe. No one need dread injustice. Justice is all we have to fear. Many torment themselves needlessly, blame themselves where blame does not attach, worry

about matters which they could not control. They will be much relieved some day. But, in truth, my dear fellow, I fear most of us are inclined the other way. Pride is awfully stubborn ; human nature delights in soothing itself in unctuous flattery of the soul. I shrewdly suspect that blank astonishment and profound dismay at the consequences for which we are responsible will be the predominant sensations generated by entrance into the subjective world.

LXXXVIII

“ Who can say where moral responsibility begins and ends ? What are morals and duty ? An arbitrary conception of what is right and wrong, an estimate more or less erroneous arrived at by the individual and by society. And it shifts ; for what is justifiable in one individual or in one age is not justifiable in another individual and in another age. In some persons moral sense is naturally almost non-existent. It has to be formed. In others moral sense has been atrophied by neglect, or falsely dyed with the colouring of a low environment, spiritual or physical, or,

as is usually the case, by both. By careful exercise it must be restored to health. No human being can do more than try his best to live up to his highest standard. No man has ever attained that ideal ; but be sure of this, if he goes near it, his progress will be great. He will be born into a life of infinite possibilities and with high capacities for their employment and use.

“ Few people are actively, willingly, consciously bad. Few devote themselves, their opportunities, their will, deliberately to the cultivation of evil in preference to good. Such are either advancing towards ultimate extinction, if that is conceivable, or will at any rate require a terrible experience to force the consciousness of discord upon their discordant spirits. The majority of the human race wish to live a decent life. The trouble is they do not wish hard enough. They blunder about in ignorance, sometimes because they will not, generally because they are too indolent to open their eyes. They stagger and fall, and crawl, because their legs are shaky under them, and they lack the moral pluck to pick themselves up. And they are sorry and wish it were otherwise, but

there is no passion in the wish. All people, except the hopelessly bad, have an ideal. At times in every life our 'better self' has the upper hand, and we know it for our better self. There are momentary glimpses of what we ought to be, and for a moment we grasp and cling to it. We sometimes catch through clouds a glimpse of the summit towards which with many slips and stumbles we climb. The guardian's face is bright, and his voice audible at times. To the highest conception in our experience we can attain, and if we have the will we must attain in time. Trust me, every man is, even in this befogged life, his own judge. Delude ourselves as we may, close our eyes, and shut our ears as we choose, plaster ourselves with pride, smother ourselves in obstinacy, stupefy ourselves with argument to the top of our bent, yet in our heart of hearts we *know*; and I hold to that extent we are responsible, and that every mistake, every crime, every sin must be outworn, expiated to the bitter end."

LXXXIX

“ Ay, but what is the bitter end ? ” Harry asked. “ Surely you do not deny the Divine faculty of forgiveness ? ”

“ Of course I do not, but does not your question answer itself ? Arriving at the condition to merit forgiveness is arriving at the bitter end ; and generally it is very bitter indeed. The condition precedent to forgiveness is intense desire to make things as they were ; and forgiveness is making things as they were, as far as is possible. Of course, if you do me a physical injury, shoot my eye out, for instance, you cannot shoot it in again. Forgiveness requires self-acknowledgment of error, restitution as far as practicable, and desire to make restitution complete. An exceeding bitter pill to swallow. God forbid that I should seek to pry into, still less to limit, God’s mercy. ‘ God be merciful to me, a sinner,’ is the best and truest of all prayers.

“ Is not wrong often the first, perhaps the necessary, condition of right—a slip backwards, the preliminary of advance ? Do we not often attempt many things beyond our

unaided power, and consequently fail? But the failure, however alarming the results may be, is often the first step to success. Surely, then, forgiveness is not difficult to compass to those who truly try. Read the wonderful parable of the Prodigal Son. Is not God's love extended to all? Most freely given to those who need it most? It is not the strong who need help and support, but the weak. We who have wandered most widely may look for welcome not less wide.

“How I loathe the stony-heartedness of men, the religious arrogance, the moral vanity, the spiritual pride that loves to gather in its skirts and pass contemptuously by! How can any man bear to shut out his brother from help and kindness? How can he dare to think that God's gates of kindness and of help are ever closed? When the spirit, knowing its wrong-doing, commences the work of self-amendment, and pursues it with unwavering will, who shall say that it does not attain, perhaps all the sooner for its fall, to that path which leads the Divine spark, the spiritual essence, that portion of God which is implanted in every human being, back through long courses of spiritual

evolution to the fountain from which it sprang ?

“ Every sin must be expiated, every wrong atoned for. Yes ; but in the sacrifice of pride, the truthful spirit, the honest effort, and the unwavering wish lies expiation, atonement, and forgiveness. Without honesty of intention there can be no forgiveness ; when the honest man forgives himself he is forgiven, and often long before. And how little do we help each other ! What sin can be so great, as refusing to hold out a helping hand ? Mutual help, charity, love, how beautiful and how rare, and how difficult to practise in this hard old world ! ”

XC

“ Yes,” said Harry, “ that is perfect and beautiful in theory ; but in practice, in the affairs of life, how can so sublime a system of ethics be brought into play ? ”

“ My dear fellow, you drag me down from heaven to earth with somewhat startling abruptness. The whole value of Christian ethics is involved in what you say. Day is breaking, and I will not be seduced to wander

off into that tortuous path. Only this I will repeat—though it seems to me I have said so over and over again—reason and common sense must be applied to religion, morals, ethics, and everything else that affects humanity under the sun. The fatal error of the exponents of Christianity consists in not recognising this fact. They look upon that religion as a system of ethics and a revelation absolutely complete for all time, as an absolute truth presenting always the same appearance and the same meaning. What an exceedingly small, human and degraded view to take! Man is incapable at present of seeing and supporting absolute truth. Truth must be viewed through glasses tinted by man's animal, intellectual, and spiritual condition of development, which is changing all the time. The real vitality of Christianity, the best evidence of its Divine origin, consists in its adaptability to every one of the multitudinous phases of existence. Its revelation and its ethics must, unless it ceases to be a religion and becomes an abstraction, be considered and acted upon by man in reference to the conditions, physical, moral, and spiritual, in which he lives, moves, and has

his being. Were a man to act persistently on the advice to forgive his brother up to seventy times seven, to present his cloak to him who stole his coat, and to turn the other cheek to the smiter, it is obvious that life could not be carried on. The immediate result would be that he would denude himself, and those dependent on him, of the means of existence ; that he would find himself in the nearest police-station ; and that violence pure and simple would rule the world. No, no ; practical sound common sense and reason must be applied to codes of morals and rules of life as to everything else. Self-preservation is not only the right, it is the duty of man. It is imposed upon him to look after his honour, his happiness, his welfare himself. But I am growing tired of this talk. All the same, your last questions dispose me to suspect that what I have ventured to say may be taken too literally. You must not do so. I refuse to be run too hard to ground.

XCI

“ It is right that a man should look out for himself ; but caution and suspicion must not be carried too far. All virtue turns into vice if exercised to excess. Worldly wisdom may be a virtue ; but it has a dubious smell. When carried to excess it is an odious and malodorous vice. Far better is it for a man to be deceived and suffer, to pay the penalty of a confiding nature, than to go through life wrapped against his fellow-creatures in the hard folds of constant impenetrable suspicion.

“ A while ago, while that sinking star was still far above the hill, I said that self-preservation was the strongest instinct of man, and the desire to perpetuate his species the next in strength ; and I quoted, as alone capable of accounting for the potency of these instinctive impulses of the animal nature, the extreme importance of earth-life to the incarnate spirit, and the urgent clamouring of spiritual monads for animal human bodies to inhabit. And that is true. But, for heaven’s sake, don’t run off with the idea that man’s attention should be

concentrated upon his own wretched little individual earth-life ; and that the first duty of every human being is to be instrumental in producing as many human animals as possible. Man should defend his life to the utmost, and instinctively does so, for he struggles against even self-inflicted death. But he should risk it freely, and sacrifice it gladly in innumerable cases. Could those cases be investigated, it would, of course, be found that gain and not loss accrues to the spirit.

XCII

“ Constant care for life, anxious fear of death, is intensely demoralising to man’s animal nature, and consequently to the inhabiting spirit. Though it enters at present into no human code, there can be few greater crimes than the reproduction of the species by unfit parents, by persons say, for instance, with an undoubted taint of hereditary disease. In the cause of humanity we interfere with the course of nature under which weakly specimens would soon disappear in the competitive struggle of life ; but we do not appear to have grasped

the fact that the consequences of our charity must inevitably be bad unless we substitute self-restraint for the rough methods of nature.

“Sinful also must it be to bring children into the world under circumstances which deprive them of any opportunity of developing themselves. No, let us apply reason, common sense, and moderation to all things. The spiritual monads seeking incarnation will look after themselves or be looked after. And there does not seem to be much danger of the human race dying out just at present. And now I have talked enough. It is almost day. The train of thought you have let me into oppresses the mind. My brain is weary, and, in truth, my body too.”

XCIII

But Dick protested. “Now, do sit still for just one moment more. It is not often you are in this mood. I must frankly say that I have never seen you in such a one before, or dreamed that you bothered yourself at all about the subjects of our talk. It may be long before we meet again. Never

probably shall we be together again in such a scene and on such a night—a night which might well turn the most practical man into a dreamer for the nonce. Tell us before we part, granting all your spiritual theories to be correct, why do you attach such importance to this little span of earth-life? What is the life of man upon this earth? What is this puny speck of a world in the system of our sun, and what is that to other suns and other systems, and to a universe incomprehensible to us? And what are a few years upon earth compared to the eternity of spiritual existence?”

“There you go headlong into the inextricable confusion arising from an attempt to analyse and deal with, in terms of this existence, an existence to which those terms are absolutely inapplicable and meaningless. What sense is there in talking of time as a measure of no time? This life, you say, is very short. So it is; but you cannot speak of it as a portion of Eternity. It is short as compared with a longer, long as compared with a shorter period of time. Its importance is to be gauged solely by the occurrences in it and the consequences follow-

ing upon them. I thought I had made all this clear. Earth-life is all-important to spirit, because it is in that phase of existence that it becomes differentiated. At some point or other of the evolutionary ascension of spirit in matter towards pure, perfect, universal consciousness the spiritual atom must become conscious. It does so when it becomes associated with matter sufficiently developed. That event—obviously the most important in the whole spiritual career—occurs when the animal and spiritual life are blended in man. From that event onward the spirit controls itself. And during the remainder of its career, however prolonged in measure of our time it may be, however various and numberless may be the spheres inhabited and the experiences undergone, that identity, that individual consciousness is retained.

“What can compare in importance to earth-life? Within its span is fashioned and born a conscious individual that lives for evermore. And earth-life is the laboratory in which the spirit actually makes the next world. It enters into what has been created by it, and if it has created nothing, what

has it to enter into ? Earth-life is the chrysalis stage in which, and in which alone, the beautiful insect is and can be prepared. It is impossible to estimate the difficulty with which experience is gained in the next life, as compared with the ease attending its acquirement in earth-life ; but obviously it must be great. God in nature is absolutely merciful, absolutely just, and without the shadow of doubt the spirit does not, cannot, suffer for having its period of earth-life cut short through no fault of its own. But the experience of earth-life is most valuable, and self-destruction of the animal body is the most foolish act that man can commit.

XCIV

“ And now let me make one request and offer you one word of advice. Don't ask me to discuss these subjects further. I dread a reaction to materialism of some sort that would be painful to me. You wonder that I, a practical man, should think at all on such abstruse subjects. So do I. I wish to be practical. It is the most natural and

most wholesome life for the majority of men. But things happen, sickness, sorrows, or perhaps solitude, that impel to thought. Man must then think and rearrange himself somehow. But do not, I pray you, trouble overmuch about these subjects. It is not wholesome, it is not natural, it is not right. Self-introspection is unhealthy. Too much self-analysis conduces to disease. Man's eyes should be turned outward to the observation of, enjoyment of, and control of external nature. He is better employed under the full light of day in seeking to acquire and diffuse knowledge, in striving to be of some service to man ; than in groping about, dimly guided by the little flicker of reason in the dark, mysterious caverns of his soul. Enjoy life ; it is very glorious, very sweet to live. Man is an animal, and should take satisfaction in all the pleasures of animal life ; and man is an intellectual human being. Take full satisfaction in all the joys of refined intelligence and cultivated tastes. The mingled wine of animal and intellectual life is strong but wholesome, drink freely from the cup that nature offers.

“ But do not neglect substance for shadow,

do not forget the spirit, for that alone is real. You marvel at me, indulging in psychological musings. What can be more practical for any man than to discover himself, to understand and develop the infinitely most important principle in him? Man, a composite creature, animal, human and divine, dwells here for a little while in a most beautiful world. Let him enjoy. Let him cultivate himself, not one portion only, but his whole self; and, if he possibly can, live to be what he is intended to be, an ascending, improving, progressing spiritual human animal, a natural, healthy man.

XCV

“ And now get up, stand upon your feet, and face the sun. We have talked right through the all too short, sweet silence of the summer night. Sad but lovely was the night; lordly, joyous is the sun. Hear how the waves that wailed throughout the night break into happy laughter in his beams! See how the sleeping earth wakes, thrills, and colours at his touch. I stretch out my hands in welcome to his strength.

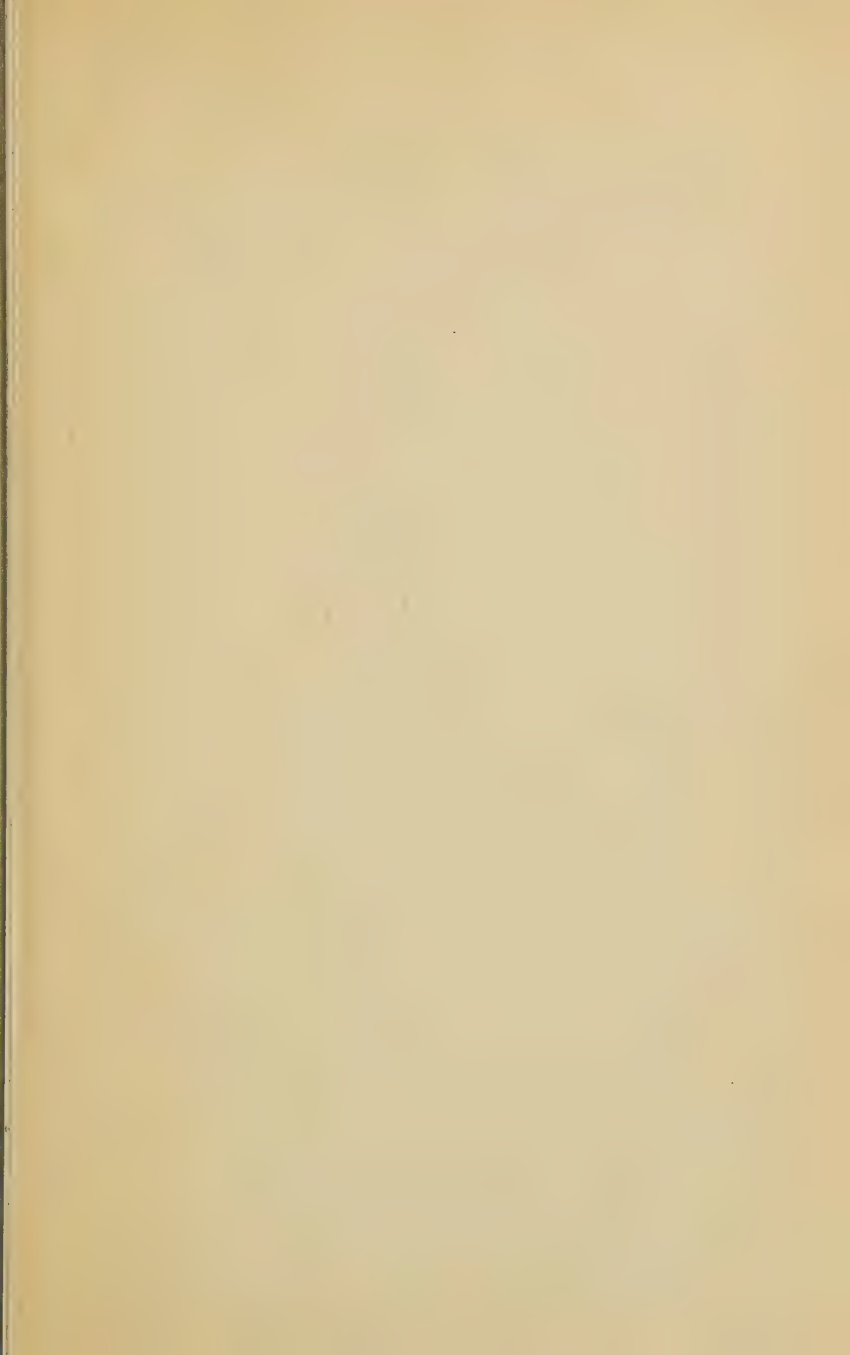
“Come, let us go. That swaying column of blue smoke, not to mention a delicious smell of coffee, recalls me to the ‘earth, and invites me home. What you two fellows are going to do till breakfast I do not know ; but this is borne in upon me, that I will wrap myself in the soft arms of Nature. I crave to lie close folded in her sweet but treacherous embrace. In other words, the crisp crystal of that clear blue sea allures me, and I will bathe. Breakfast sounds vulgar, low, prosaic, after the tension of the night, the suggestive idealism, or realism, of our talk. Hot coffee is but objectively unreal, is it ? Well, chaff me as you will. I have laid myself open to it. What is real ? The aroma of fresh roasting coffee that greets me now is frankly gratifying to the senses, and, so far as the senses are concerned, is very real indeed ; but it is suggestive of more than breakfast—it is creative of far more than that. It draws me back to the long ago, and leads me to soft Southern climes. I see the little threads of smoke curling up from humble peasant homes, the dewy diamonds of the morning set in delicate purple tints of the crocus upon the short

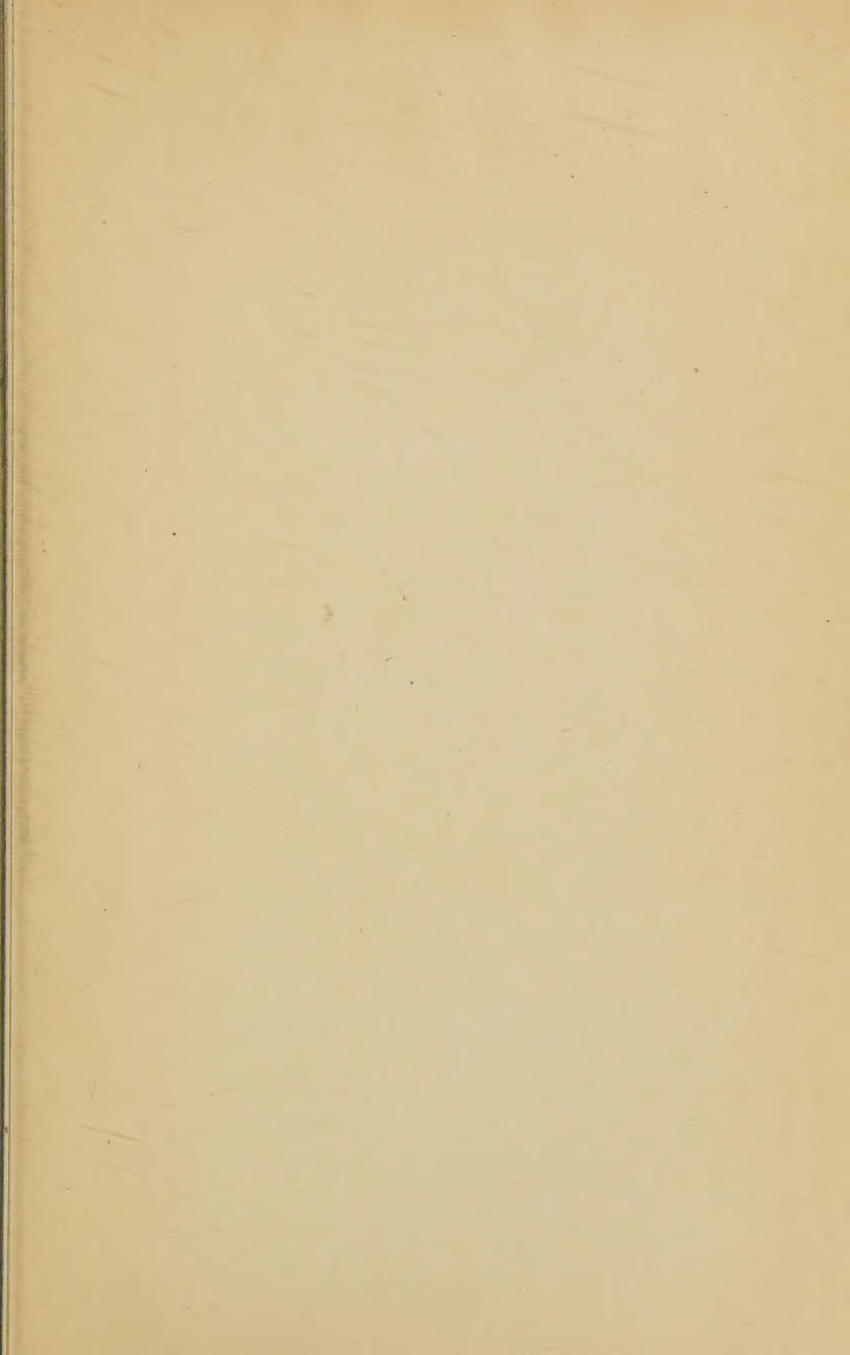
green sward. Quaint old cities rise before me ; and the staring shutters, and the monstrous ugliness of the modern Italian style, beautiful in the lush luxuriance and prodigal profusion of tree and shrub. I see the windy whiteness of the olive, the tall stalks of maize, the delicate drooping of its feathered plume, the golden globes and large-leaved tendrils of the creeping vine beneath. The blue distance of long valleys, black forest, and glaring cliff, meadow intervals, cool shade and sunny hillsides, the long stretch of shining rivers wandering through grey colouring of sand and willow on their way, rise before me. I hear and feel the throb of Nature, the strong vitality of the sun, as I lie upon the cool green grass and see the prying sunshine press aside the arching green to kiss the soft cheek of the fast-ripening grape. I see all that as I saw it long ago. How real is it ? Well, I leave you to settle it among yourselves and I will go and plunge me in the ever-living sea.

“ I know a little valley that drifts down from a miniature pasture to the sand ; it is hemmed by purple rock, and blue-green

pinces, and rich with tender fern fronds and the golden gleam of whins. A tiny thread of silver creeps down with low but perfect cadence, and drops in little notes of music on a tiny beach, that melts into the whitest sand just where a tall arbutus stoops to see its ruddy berries in the wave. There is the home of naiads, if they anywhere remain. There even chaste Diana might disport herself secure ; and there will I seek life and vigour from the mother of all life."

PRINTED BY
WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LTD.
PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND





32m

~~150~~
(50)

BF1261

.P97

1917

90231

ST. OLAF COLLEGE
BF1261 .P97 1917
A Psychic vigil in three watches.



3 0111 00106 7874